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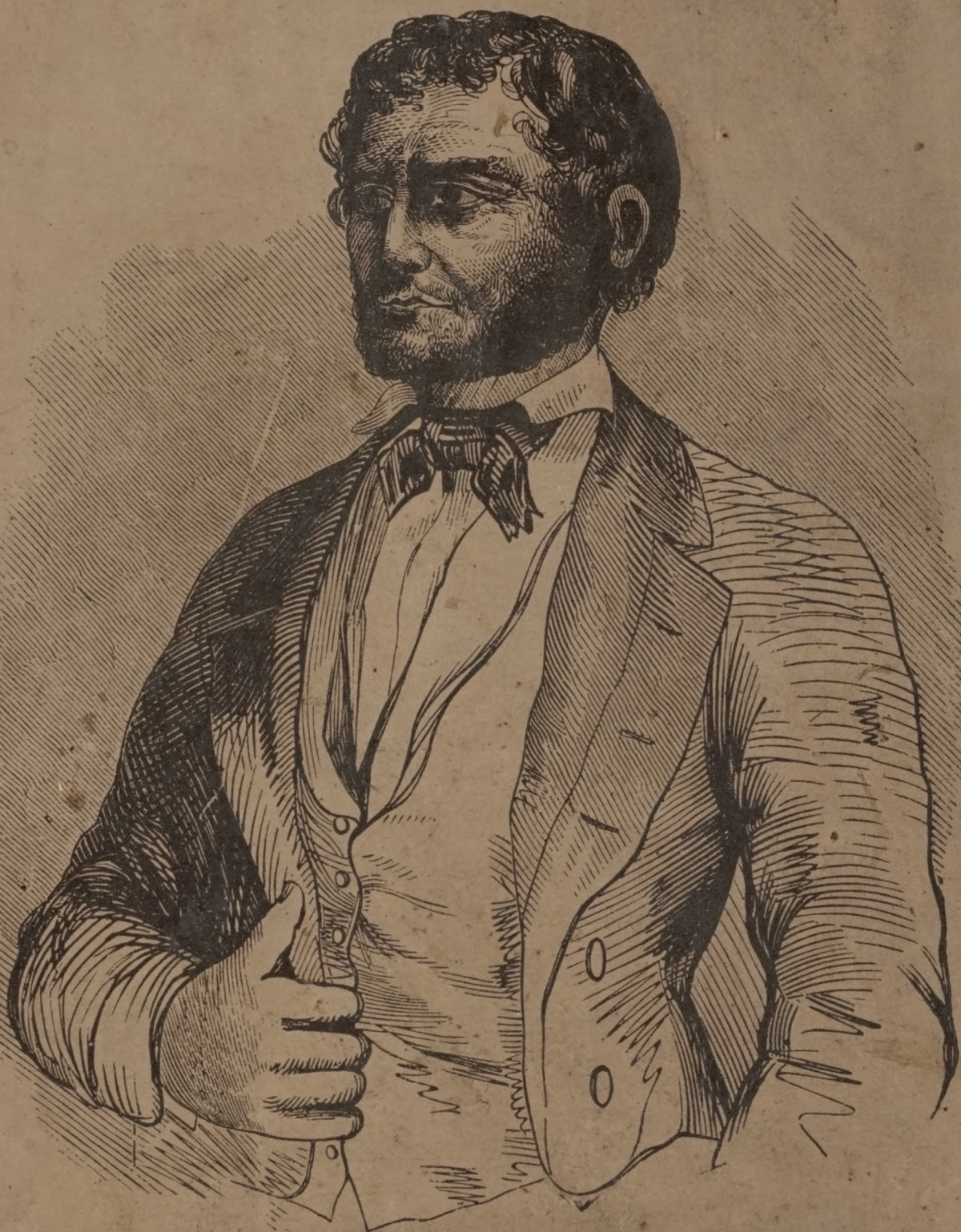
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LIFE AND EXPLOITS

— Thompson, George — OF

THE NOTED CRIMINAL,



BRISTOL BILL.

BY GREENHORN.

NEW YORK:

M. J. IVERS & CO., PUBLISHERS.

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LIFE AND EXPLOITS OF BRISTOL BILL.

CHAPTER I.

THE HEROIC IN ROGUES—MIKE MARTIN AND MUNROE EDWARDS—"BRISTOL BILL"—EXTENSIVE ASSOCIATION OF BURGLARS, COUNTERFEITERS, ETC.—AUTHENTICITY OF BILL'S BIOGRAPHY.

To such a complete science has professional villany of late years been reduced, so innumerable are the chances of detection, and so severe are the penalties in case of conviction,—that the man who has passed through a long career of crime, and signalized his life by daring exploits and hair-breadth escapes, is now generally looked upon somewhat in the light of a hero. There were certainly heroic qualities in the composition of Michael Martin, the highway robber—and it was an extraordinary though peculiar talent that enabled Monroe Edwards, while figuring in the character of an accomplished gentleman, to plan and for a long time successfully carry out the most stupendous schemes of forgery and fraud recorded in the annals of American rascality. Had the chivalric bravery and indomitable energy of Martin been exercised in a worthier vocation, his name might have been handed down to fame as one of the truest of heroes, the record of his deeds unstained

by anything like dishonor. And so with Edwards—what might he not have been? With a faultless person, and all the accomplishments of a refined education—with a grace and urbanity which never forsook him—and with a considerable degree of genius, and great fertility of invention—he might, it is not vain to say, had all his qualities been directed aright, have filled, with honor and credit to himself, important posts even in the councils of the nation. It is therefore, that, looking at the component parts which go to make up the most daring and successful villains of our times, persons of all classes, while they retain their antipathy to crime, still, almost involuntarily, look with admiration upon the genius of the criminal, and breathe something of sympathy for his fate.

Probably, for a few years past, no "professional" burglar or bank-robber has at times created more consternation, by his successful and astonishing enterprises, in various localities in the Northern States, than the subject of this work; nor has any one more shrewdly and skilfully performed all the details of crime, or more successfully (until his last effort in Vermont) repelled the vigilance of the most celebrated police, and eluded all attempts at detection.

LIFE AND EXPLOITS

It was in the month of August, 1849, that "BRISTOL BILL," as he is generally called, first came personally before the public eye in the city of Boston. Matters connected with this period of his eventful career will be detailed hereafter in their proper course. Since the occasion of his appearance here last year—(supposed then, by the police and the public, to be his *first* advent in Boston)—he has been the frequent theme of the press, and has filled a conspicuous position in the formidable array of known rogues. So much of exciting interest, and so much of what might perhaps be called romantic mystery, have been wrapped around events in the life of this notorious convict, that the author, availing himself of unusual facilities in such a case, has here thrown together, in a compact form, such of the various incidents in the history of Bristol Bill, gathered from sources of undoubted correctness, as it was thought would prove interesting, and possibly instructive, to a curious public.

A complete narration of everything criminal connected with the movements of this remarkable individual, would fill a most voluminous volume. He was a member, and one of the leading spirits, of the most extensive association of counterfeiters and burglars, and swindlers on a sublime scale, that was ever formed in the Western world; an association which, centralizing itself in the chief metropolis, reached and infected, with its multifarious ramifications of crime, the business community of every city in the Union and the Canadas. But, within a few past months, one after another member of this mighty gang has been detected and captured, until now it is to be supposed that this vast and formidable association of criminals is almost entirely broken up, shorn of its strength, and none of its power left except in the futile efforts of solitary individuals who have thus far escaped the ordeal of trial and the severe sentence of the just laws of the land.

Considering, therefore, the extensive area which would necessarily be covered and traversed, in order to comprise in our work everything of interest connected directly or indirectly with the career of Bristol Bill in this country, we shall confine ourself strictly to such incidents, and fragments of criminal history, as are most intimately connected with the individual life of him whose biography we have undertaken briefly to compile.

Knowing the interest that is ever felt in the public mind, to learn as much as possible of the early life of any celebrated character, we have endeavored to truthfully portray the scenes of William Darlington's early days, and describe, according to the facilities afforded, that period of his history which first saw him impelled to crime, and which so strongly marked out, for the once innocent but rash young man, a walk in life not easily to be retraced, and leading slowly but surely to the disgraceful fate of a most notorious and convicted criminal. To those who know intimately the subject of our sketch, and who, under certain fortuitous circumstances, have listened to the evidently sincere relation of incidents in his early and later history, we need scarcely say, that little of fiction will be found in this memoir, and also that many of the most thrilling scenes in Darlington's life must necessarily be imperfectly described. We know of but one gentleman coming from the land of Darlington's nativity, who has ever been enabled to afford the slightest information concerning the early career of our hero; and such facts as we have gleaned at times from him most strictly correspond with the many fragments of a confessional nature made by Bristol Bill himself. It is therefore that we feel warranted in putting before the world a publication of what we consider a genuine history of the most celebrated burglar and bank robber of modern times.

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CHAPTER II.

THE EARLY LIFE OF BRISTOL BILL—HIS CHARACTER—HE IS SENT TO ETON—HE FROLICS MORE THAN HE STUDIES—HE SEDUCES A GIRL WHOM HE LOVES—RUPTURE WITH HIS PARENTS—BILL AND MARY ELOPE TO LONDON.

William Darlington is an Englishman by birth, and was born about the year 1802, in the town of Bristol. His parents were of an old and very respectable family, and it is said, on good authority, that the father of our hero was at one time a member of the English parliament. The surname of the subject of our sketch we are not at liberty to give; for it has of late been not an unfrequently expressed hope that he should once more visit the scene of his childhood, and look upon the faces of the remaining members of his family, who, as he confidently trusts, have ever been ignorant of his wicked career. Suffice it to say, that he was christened with the name of William Trevor—that he was a second son, and, had he pursued a steadier course when young, the careful pains and liberal wealth of his parents would have fitted him for a most honorable position in life. But William was a wild and reckless fellow—a dare-devil sort of a boy, who had much rather go on a fox-hunt than attend to the studies of school. His father, however, was strict, and by dint of perpetual vigilance succeeded in forcing into Bill's head, despite his love of frolic, a sufficient variety of learning to enable him to enter Eton College. But the watchfulness of proctors and the reprimands of professors proved no bar to the careless behavior of the headstrong youth. His studies were neglected; and it was not an unusual occurrence for Bill, with the money that was freely allowed him, to suddenly start on a trip to London, there to see the sights in the great metropolis, and when his money was nearly gone and his frolic over, to return ex-

tremely repentant to his father's house. Severe reproof and a fresh supply of money would follow the meeting, and Bill would soon be on his way back to Eton—there to study closely for a few days, and then again yield to his burning thirst for freedom and adventure.

There was one being, who, perhaps more than any other, at this time caused the life of William Darlington to be turned from its natural channel, and to ever after teem with all that was reckless and criminal. Mary Livingston was the daughter of a poor curate; and, possessed of unusual amiability and sweetness of temper, together with a well cultivated mind, had early attracted the attention of Darlington's parents. It was therefore, that when Mary, at the age of sixteen, was suddenly left an orphan, she accepted with a grateful heart the kind offer made by them, that she should become an inmate of their comfortable abode, and assist in the instruction of two or three of the younger members of the family. Mary Livingston has been described, by one whom we need not name, as a girl of surpassing loveliness—and her mind was as free from taint, and her heart as innocent and childlike, as her form was graceful and her face angelic. William, from the day that she first made his father's house her home, became exceedingly attached to her; and although Mary might not have been altogether pleased with the sometimes boyish rudeness and mad tricks of her young lover, she could not refrain from admiring his generous disposition and his frankness of expression and manner—the latter characteristic perhaps as remarkable in his younger days, as have been his shrewdness, cunning, and duplicity, in later years. There was something, it may be, of romantic love, in Bill's composition, that led him occasionally to forsake the classic retreats of Eton, and start, in defiance of all parental orders and collegiate rules, for home and the arms of his adored Mary. A year on

two thus passed on—Bill often playing the truant—disappearing for days together on some mysterious frolic, or roving into neighboring villages, prying into the shops of mechanics, making the acquaintance of artisans, and gratifying his inordinate curiosity in every way possible. Often would he be found, with his jacket off, exercising his ingenuity and invention in the workshop of some mechanic, tinkering away at the broken fragments of some old machine, whistling, and cracking his jokes with the workmen, who seemed to think him quite a smart and clever young man—“considerin’ he was one of those ’ere Eton boys.” But a most unfortunate epoch in the life of more than one individual was destined at this time to be reached. On the occasion of a somewhat lengthy visit at home, enjoying the society of his Mary, and listening impatiently to the chidings of his father, an unholy passion seized on the heart of the rash and unthinking youth, and in a moment of impetuous love and tearful frenzy, the pleading voice and earnest expostulations of the fair being he adored were hushed, and her ruin was accomplished. Calm reflection brought dismay and confusion to the hearts of both, and the unfortunate Mary poured a flood of tears on the bosom of her unwise lover. But William kissed the pale brow of the weeping girl, and swore eternal fidelity to her, no matter what else betide.

Months flew rapidly by. The impassioned missives of mutual love passed frequently to and fro, when Darlington was suddenly summoned to calm reflection, by the tear-stained letter of Mary, announcing, in delicate and affecting terms, that the time was fast drawing near when the result of their passionate love must bring exposure, and she with disgrace be thrown an outcast into the cold unfeeling world. It was then that the young man, at this time twenty years of age, first began to truly realize his follies and position, and to earnestly feel the remorse he could not but have, at shrouding

in unhappiness and dishonor the heart of his idolized Mary. He waited not to bid adieu to his gay comrades at Eton, but hurried homeward with all speed, reaching the mansion of his father with more of the sad and serious pictured in his countenance than he was ever before known to exhibit. The plea of sickness was given, and then he flew to the side of Mary, to be received with tears of welcome, and to offer anew his vows of love and constancy. Days passed, and each succeeding sun but gave deeper warning of the terrible denouement that must inevitably soon take place. Loss of home and utter ruin stared young Darlington in the face; and poor Mary, how was she to bear up under the pitiless storm of disgrace! But William could only whisper vain consolation in her ear, and faintly express the hope that a kind father would look gently on the erring pair, that the neighboring curate would be permitted to rivet forever their bonds of love, and that all would yet be well.

But bitter disappointment was destined to attend the unhappy lovers. Appearances in such a case are not deceitful;—the almost constant communion of William with Mary—the pale face and dejected air of the sorrowing girl—the altered countenance and manner of the formerly gay and reckless boy—all, in the eyes of watchful parents, denoted something extraordinary;—and, with the almost unconscious curiosity thus excited, it was impossible that the true state of affairs could long remain concealed.

The exposure came—the father was even brutal in his maniacal rage, and he struck his son to the earth; while the mother retired to the solitude of her chamber, to dwell in tears and prayer on the mournful evidence of the wickedness which had caused her beloved adopted daughter to fall from the high estate of virtue, through the evil persuasion and mad passion of her own fond son. The father was wild in his denunciation of William’s conduct, and bade

Mary to leave his threshold forever. The son strove in vain to avert the impending doom—but all his pleas were in vain; he was threatened with being cast into the world upon his own resources—with utter banishment from home, and all hope of parental aid and mercy.

The determination of the reckless but now stern young man was sudden and irresistible. Not for a moment would he harbor a thought of separation from the idol of his heart—if she was to suffer the ban of disgrace and poverty, he would also share the same fate, and stand by her side a protector, if not a husband.

The coach for London passed early in the morn. The clothes and effects of the unhappy twain were secretly packed, and they were ready for departure. The parents were tossing in uneasy slumber, when at the noon of night, the adventurous Darlington quietly glided from his chamber, and entered the dressing-room of his father. The escritoire was open, and money was exposed to view. Hastily grasping such as met his eye, amounting to some seventy pounds sterling, he extinguished the taper he had borne with him, and noiselessly left the apartment. Proceeding to the room occupied by Mary, he called her softly by name; no sleep had closed her eyelids, and she instantly sprang to her feet. Darlington informed her of his operations, and they instantly prepared to leave the mansion which had been the scene of so many happy hours, but was now the abiding place of sorrow and disgrace.

The next day saw them in London. Taking lodgings in the outskirts of that vast city, almost a world in itself, they enjoyed for a season all the delights that continual intercourse and the uninterrupted society of each other could produce. But Bill's finances were not inexhaustible, and they gradually dwindled away. Jewelry and trinkets slowly disappeared in the dark recesses of the pawnbroker's closets, and the

time had arrived when Bill must cast about him to find some means of livelihood. Since his last arrival in London, he had studiously avoided the public houses and places to which he had been accustomed to resort while on his frolicsome visits during his collegiate course at Eton, and he had, as he supposed, eluded all the vigilance and inquiries of his father and his friends. Too proud to resume an acquaintance with persons who had previously known him, or to solicit employment from any one who could trace his identity, he roamed, for many a weary day, the crowded streets, searching in vain for some humble situation which it was possible for him to fill. He had been too negligent a scholar to now make a clerk or an accountant, and he was altogether unfitted for anything in a professional sphere. Stark poverty stared him unblushingly in the face;—there was poor Mary at their now miserable lodgings, waiting through many a tedious hour for William's return with words of encouragement;—and it finally came to pass, that the still loving but wretched girl, rocking her innocent babe to and fro, waited, not merely for the kind words and warm kisses of the unfortunate Darlington, but with pallid face and streaming eyes looked for his presence, trusting for even the scanty food that must keep alive her famishing child. The selfish and cold-hearted landlord had too long harassed his tenants to now exhibit the least feeling or mercy towards those whose means of paying a paltry rent had vanished. Weary and haggard, came home at night the young man who had been reared in luxury, but now panting beneath the load of poverty and misfortune. No thought of crime had ever tainted the generous, honest impulses of his heart—all that he now sought for was, to feed the hungry mouths of those who hung dependant on his feeble arm.

CHAPTER III.

A NIGHT IN LONDON—THE HOME OF POVERTY—MARY LIVINGSTON—WILLIAM DARLINGTON AND HIS FIRST CRIME.

It was a dreary eve in November—the first dusky shade of night was settling over London city. In a barren room, containing hardly the necessary comforts of sleep or existence, in one of the most poverty-stricken lanes of the great metropolis—sat by the cold fireside, while the chill wind whistled in pitying tones through the broken casement, a woman, whose raven curls had never waved in the sun of more than twenty summers—but her dark eye and blanched cheek too plainly told the tale of sorrow that had prematurely bent her once agile and graceful form, dimmed the bright lustre of her eyes, and changed the roseate hues of innocent youth to the snowy whiteness of long distress and a despairing heart. Her shivering arms were scarcely hid by the miserable remnant of a threadbare shawl, which she fondly wrapped around the emaciated form of a babe whose pretty lineaments spoke truly of its parentage. Oh, what were the thoughts of Mary Livingston, as with straining ear she listened to the creak of every door in that ruinous but populous abode—as the damp night breeze came fitfully sighing through the broken panes, but brought no echoes of William's footsteps! He had been gone since day-break, and not a morsel of food had found its way to her parched lips.

But the heavy tread of a man, laden with nothing but despair, is heard—and William Darlington, with glaring eyes and wild dishevelled locks, slowly and silently enters the wretched apartment, and seats himself moodily in the only vacant chair.

"Dear William!" said the weeping partner of his guilt and sorrow—but the flood of tears drowned all other words.

Darlington's flashing eye was moistened with a tear, but he made no utterance save

a groan that seemed to well forth from his inmost heart. Striking his hand violently upon his forehead, he rose, and rushed from the abode of misery. Whither his steps tended he knew not—he only felt the horrible truth gnawing at his heart, that Mary—yes, the once fair and virtuous Mary Livingston—with her innocent babe—was starving! Oh, what madness seized his soul—he strided the crowded streets like a maniac, his blood-shot eyes glaring wildly on the thousand faces that seemed not to notice him as he passed. There were youth and beauty, wealth and fashion, all around him—there were the shops whose illuminated windows teemed with all the luxuries of life—and, more than all, piled in huge heaps, on the counter of a sleek and cold eyed baker—there was BREAD! Darlington gazed for a moment—he stepped within the door; the proprietor was busy in attendance on women and children—almost unconscious of the act, the desperate man grasped a loaf of soft, sweet *bread*—such a prize! that he clutched it with both hands until his attenuated fingers met in the centre—and glided into the street, and hurried, nay, ran with fleet steps, homeward. But the throng was great—from whence came all those people, with their well-filled baskets and joyous faces? From the over-stocked market house. The lamps gleamed luridly on the scene—the great quarters of fresh beef looked so rich and red! the bacon hung like clusters of fruit in the windows and from the ceiling! the white carcasses of lambs lay so invitingly to view! all was luxuriance and profusion. What a sight for famished eyes! What wonder, then, that poor Bill paused—gazed first on the contented crowd, and then at the ample resources of the market-house! Oh, that he had but one silver shilling—one of those that he had a thousand times thrown carelessly away to laughing, playing boys by the wayside! But his pockets were empty, and Mary was starving! He had:

loaf of bread, to be sure—but how his eyes glugged on those delicious hams that lay almost within his grasp! The door-way was jammed with the entering and departing crowd—all was business and bustle—no one would notice him—and the wretched Darlington completed the second chapter in his career of crime—if crime, indeed, it may be called.

Mary sprang to her feet alarmed, as the door was suddenly burst open, and William threw his ill-gotten booty to the floor. She questioned him in vain, and for a long time he sat, with his face buried in his hands, seemingly unconscious of everything.

“Ask me no questions,” he finally murmured—“there is food—let us be content. To-morrow I will have employment, and all will be well. Keep up a courageous heart, Mary, and we will yet be happy.”

The downcast woman was cheered by these words of encouragement, and after imprinting a kiss on the gloomy brow of Darlington, she sat about preparing what was to them a most luxurious meal. Bill gradually recovered from his despondency, and midnight lowered its dark curtain over the peaceful slumbers of the father and mother, as they hugged to their bosoms the little victim of their first dereliction.

CHAPTER IV.

BILL FINDS WORK—BECOMES A LOCKSMITH—HIS INGENUITY—HE FRUSTRATES A ROBBERY—BREAKING UP OF THE EMPLOYER'S ESTABLISHMENT—SINGULAR DEVELOPMENTS.

In the course of the next day, Darlington, while on his weary ramble for work, looked into the shop of a locksmith, who appeared to be doing quite an extensive business, occupying a tolerably large building, and employing a considerable number of workmen. Bill had ever evinced a me-

chanical genius, and his memory instantly reverted to the vicinity of Eton, where he had spent so many hours in the company of artificers, and had himself exercised a little of his skill and ingenuity. He gazed on the contented faces of the toilers, as they plied their busy hands, amid the hum of machinery, and asked himself the question, “Why can I not work, and be as happy as they?” Gathering courage, he stepped into the counting room; and abruptly asked the proprietor if he could give him employment. “What can you do—are you a journeyman?” was the reply. Bill explained that he had never learned the trade of a mechanic, but he thought himself able to perform some of the more simple kinds of work in the locksmith's shop—all he wanted, was employment and a livelihood—he was poor, he said, and his wife and child were suffering. His story seemed to touch the sympathies of Mr Burns, the proprietor, and he at once introduced Bill to the overseer of the shop, who immediately set him at work, rasp in hand, on some small bars of steel.

Bill went home that night with a lighter heart than he had before felt for many a long day.

It was not long before he had acquired a wonderful proficiency in his business, and he was employed on some of the most difficult specimens of workmanship. His wages were increased, and he bore home, every Saturday, his weekly stipend, with a glad face and a contented heart. Mary met him with happy smiles; their desolate lodgings began to assume a more comfortable appearance; and a fair future seemed to be dawning upon them. It was about this time, that, in consequence of numerous burglaries, all the inventive genius of the most expert locksmiths was put in requisition for the manufacture of some kind of a lock that would resist the instruments and skeleton keys of skilful burglars. Mr Burns immediately availed himself of the services of

Darlington—offering him quite a prize if he would invent and complete such a lock as was desired. Bill thought it might be easily done, and began to study and tinker accordingly. In a few weeks, he presented to Mr Burns a very plain and ordinary lock, so far as regarded appearance, coupled with the remark that he didn't believe any one could pick that. The work was thoroughly examined, and submitted to the inspection of a large number of persons competent to pronounce a correct judgment upon it. The result was favorable—Bill was highly complimented and well rewarded—while the new lock was put into the market and the proprietor reaped an abundant harvest.

A short time after this, an event occurred which signally changed the current of Bill's life from the even tenor of its way, and once more threw him upon the world without employment or any means of obtaining an honest living.

The overseer of Burns's establishment was named Rockham—an excellent mechanic, but rather morose and sullen in his manner, and seldom speaking to persons around him but on business topics; there was a sinister expression in his countenance, and a repulsiveness of look, that Bill did not fancy, and he therefore kept aloof from his overseer as much as possible. One evening, when the work hours were over, and most of the journeymen had retired, Bill had been delayed somewhat, on a job in a remote corner of the building, and had stepped into a closet that was built under a flight of stairs proceeding to the rooms above. While there, he heard the voice of Rockham, who had come into the apartment in which Bill had been engaged, calling to some one who was at the time passing down the stairs.

"I say, Jarvis, come here!" said the overseer, in rather more pleasant tones than Bill had been accustomed to hear him use. His curiosity being a little excited, Darlington remained quietly in his position, little

suspecting the astonishing information he was about to glean.

Jarvis, one of the workmen, a large, thick set man, approached Rockham, and inquired, in low tones—"Well, captain, are all things right?"

"Yes, I've got the key to old Burns's chest—Mark has been at work on it all day. I tell you what it is, Jarvis, we'll bleed the old covey tonight. D——n him, he has had more swag than he's a right to!"

Jarvis seemed highly pleased at the remarks of Rockham, and rubbed his hands in great joy. "But won't he suspect us?" he suddenly inquired.

"Well, let him!" said Rockham—"if he dares to make a stir about it, I'll blow on him—when I go to Newgate, he follows."

"That's right," said Jarvis.

Rockham continued—"Be sure and meet me at the King's Arms tonight, at eleven o'clock. We'll have a pot of 'alf and 'alf and then come down and do the job."

Other conversation took place all of which tended to convince Bill that the overseer and several of the workmen were members of an extensive gang of burglars—their employment in the shop disarming all suspicion, and enabling them to make duplicate keys to the doors and safes of many of the wealthiest bankers in London. The allusion to Mr. Burns was no further understood by Bill, than that it was their intention to enter his counting-room at night, and rob the chest or safe, which probably contained a large amount of money.

When the overseer and his comrade had departed, Bill thought it his duty to acquaint his employer immediately with the plan of the robbers. Hastening to the counting-room, he found Mr. Burns alone, preparing for his departure homeward. In almost incoherent tones he informed the proprietor of what he had heard. Mr. Burns became greatly excited, and vowed

vengeance on those who had conspired to rob him—at the same time letting loose, as he paced the room muttering to himself, expressions with regard to “peaching,” and “the gang,” which Bill at the time in vain endeavored to comprehend, but which in after years he so well understood.

Putting several guineas in Darlington’s hand, Mr. Burns, after requesting him to say nothing of the affair to any one else, remarked that he should immediately remove all that was valuable in his chest, and bade him good night.

The next morning, as Bill passed the counting-room on his way to work, he noticed Burns and Rockham, in violent excitement, conversing in the most angry tones. Bill distinguished nothing that was said, but saw that Rockham was gesticulating in a threatening manner, and that Burns stood evidently in fear of him.

It was apparent to all, throughout the day, that there was a screw loose somewhere. The overseer was not attending to his usual duties—work was half-done, or entirely neglected—while every one seemed to entertain a strange foreboding. Towards the close of the day, Mr. Burns, pale and dejected, came from his counting-room, and addressed his workmen, who had gathered together, with the exception of two or three in the principal shop. He stated that he had suddenly met with great losses in his business operations—that he was on the verge of ruin, and must instantly suspend all work in his establishment. His workmen could not regret this course more than himself, but the matter was unavoidable.

Bill afterwards learned the true cause, in part, of this breaking up of Mr. Burns’s business. It appeared that Burns and Rockham had for a long time been in league, concocting and perfecting various burglarious schemes, from which they had realized vast sums of money. But the cupidity of Rockham had finally led him to attempt the robbery of his own colleague in crime.

This was frustrated by the information afforded by Bill Darlington. When the proprietor called Rockham to account, and charged him with the contemplated robbery, he was met with nothing but abuse and threats on the part of the overseer. Rockham even went so far as to demand a heavy sum of money, and insisted, that if it was not paid him, he would “peach” on Burns, and ruin him forever. The proprietor saw fully the character of the man he had to deal with, and reluctantly paid over the required amount. Enough transpired to so alarm Burns, that he felt himself in too precarious a situation to longer continue in business. There were other accomplices who might endeavor to realise a similar booty to that gained by Rockham, and Burns felt that he must put himself forever out of their reach. With the remainder of his wealth, most of which was ill-gotten, he suddenly left the town, and departed, it was said, for America.

CHAPTER V.

BILL IS IN IDLENESS AGAIN—THE LAST SHILLING—HE MEETS JARVIS—TEMPTED TO CRIME—THE “KING’S ARMS”—HE IS ABOUT TO BECOME A ROBBER—PREPARES FOR INITIATION.

At this period, all business in England was in a stagnant state—troubles for several years past, in the kingdom and on the continent, had impoverished the public treasury, and had caused the financial ruin of many of the greatest manufacturers and bankers in the country; the minor branches of trade suffered in consequence—the poorer classes, by thousands, were thrown out of employment, and all participated in the general despondency.

It proved a most unfortunate period for William Darlington. From the honest labor of nearly twelve months he had, it is true, saved a few pounds, but, again thrown

into idleness, his little stock of money rapidly lessened; and, worse than all, Bill, in his despondency, began to frequent the neighboring pot houses, and daily drown all thoughts of trouble in stupifying and brutalizing beer. Mary's appeals would occasionally waken him to a realizing sense of his situation, and stimulate him for a time to renewed efforts in search of work. But an evil star seemed to hover over the head of Darlington, and all his honest efforts were futile. Poverty—stark, un pitying, gnawing poverty—once more entered his portals, and stood, like a grim skeleton, day by day and night after night, hideously mocking the miserable parents, who folded to their breasts, in despair, two innocent offspring, destined, perhaps, to starve, or be trained to maturer years under the vile tuition of a parish workhouse.

The last honest shilling was in Bill's pocket. When that was gone, from whence would come food, and the faggots to keep warm the chilled form of Mary and her children! Anything—anything—thought Bill—to keep them from famishing. Vague ideas of crime fluttered like strange wild birds before his dim and sunken eyes—but Darlington was thus far no criminal at heart—he had never before pondered on a way of taking from the rich, to better the condition of his own poor self. But now, something must be done—he hardly knew what. Desperation had grasped him in its foul clutches, and there was no escape—the dark fiend of Temptation was leading him slowly but inevitably onward to the fatal goal, and his trembling footsteps were even now almost in the dreary paths of crime.

The last honest shilling! the pot-house was near—one more draught, and he could think calmly on his fate.

Seating himself in a dark corner of the gloomy, smoky ale-room, with his mug on a deal table at his side, Bill buried his face in his hands, and became wrapped in the most profound and soul-sickening medita-

tion. A once familiar voice suddenly startled him from his reverie:—

“Why, man! what makes you look so down in the chops? Brave up, and take somethin’—you’ll feel better”—and the stranger rudely twirled the empty mug upon the table.

Bill looked up, and immediately recognized Jarvis, the locksmith, whom he had not seen since the eventful night when he overheard the conspiracy to rob the iron chest. He could not resist the proffered hand of Jarvis, who immediately seated himself by his side.

At the seemingly friendly importunities of Jarvis, Bill was induced to relate a history of all his trouble, and to speak of the poverty which weighed so heavily upon him.

“Pooh, pooh, man!” exclaimed Jarvis—“there’s no need of all that! See here I always have money enough”—and the burglar drew from his pocket a handful of guineas, and shook them gaily in Darlington's face.

Bill sadly smiled—he comprehended too well the manner in which such wealth was obtained. Oh, how he needed money!—but could he ever become a robber!—Bill still doubted.

Jarvis ordered fresh potations, and Bill gradually lost his air of sorrow, and became more tractable to the seductive and flattering wiles of the shrewd villain who was tracing out for him so unenviable a destiny.

“Come, what say, Bill—you can never do better!” finally remarked his evil genius, as he slapped him on the back—“We never plunder anybody but the rich old co-veys, and they can afford to lose a little now and then for the benefit of us poor folks who can't get an honest living. There's no sort of use in letting the women or babies starve to death, when there's plenty of gold to be had. Now you'd make a glorious pal, Bill, and with your workman's skill we could drop into every ban-

ker's vault in London. Just keep a still tongue, and a stiff lip, and old Bow street never'll trouble us. I must introduce you to our boys tonight—Is'pose you are ready to be initiated, aint you, my brave chap?"

Bill gave a faint reply in the affirmative, but his heart almost failed him.

Jarvis put a guinea in his hand, and exacted a promise that Bill should meet him that evening, at a certain hour, at the King's Arms, a dingy little public house in one of the most wretched quarters of London.

Darlington, as he tottered homeward, felt that he was an altered man. But he looked again and again at the golden guinea in his hand, and thought of the comforts it would bring to his uncomfortable home. He reasoned to himself that Mary would be so happy—she would never know but that he had met with a new streak of luck in the way of honest labor, and he would not hear again his little children, whom he fondly loved, cry piteously for food and nourishment.

Purchasing a number of little articles, comforts that he had not possessed for a considerable length of time, Bill could not resist a slight feeling of joy as he thought of the glad heart of Mary, when she should meet him on his return. The home of Darlington that night was indeed a scene of revived happiness.

At the appointed hour, Bill wended his way through a number of dark streets and gloomy alleys, until he arrived before the door of the King's Arms. All was revelry within, and through the smoky windows Bill could see the motley crew that were drinking and carousing, and making the murky atmosphere resound with their vile laughter and horrible oaths.

Darlington paused. Had he come to this!—was he hereafter to consort with robbers, and be one of that outlawed class who preyed upon the better order of mankind!

But the guinea—that charmed guinea—

put in his hand by Jarvis—over which he had gloated, and which had brought food and warm garments to Mary and her babes—that fatal guinea swam before his eyes and knocked within his breast! There were more such guineas in the world, and he must have them?

Entering the door, he boldly advanced into the principal room, and glanced about in search of Jarvis. Not seeing him, he returned to the hall door, when he was suddenly touched on the shoulder, and, turning round, met the object of his search.

"Come with me," said Jarvis—and they entered a small room, where three men sat at a table, drinking, and conversing in low tones. They eyed Bill closely, as Jarvis carelessly introduced him as his "friend." Liquor was called for, and Jarvis, taking Bill into a corner most distant from the other party, resumed a conversation similar to that which had taken place during the day.

The burglar evidently satisfied himself that Bill would prove no "flunkey," and that he was ready to be initiated into the mysteries of the gang known as "Blue Boys."

In a short time, the three men first discovered in the room rose and departed, inquiring of Jarvis, as they went out—

"Is it not most time?"

"Soon," was the brief reply.

Jarvis congratulated Bill on the good prospect before him and urged him to be surprised at nothing in their mode of initiation, but to go through it all like a man.

Bill assured his patron that he was prepared for anything—even if it was to meet the devil himself.

Jarvis seemed to relish Bill's last remark, and, draining his glass, said it was now time for them to be moving—they mustn't keep the boys waiting, for they had plenty of other work to do.

Leaving the King's Arms, they proceeded through dismal lanes which Bill had

never before traversed, towards the rendezvous of the "Blue Boys."

CHAPTER VI.

THE "REACH" OF THE "BLUE BOYS"
—THE INITIATION—APPEARANCE OF THE
GANG—CAPTAIN KIT—BILL'S FIRST
ROBBERY.

The "Reach," (as the Blue Boys styled their rendezvous,) viewed from the outside, appeared to be one of the oldest houses in London. It was built of wood, and was now fast crumbling to decay. But the interior had often been repaired, and had a certain air of comfort not at all reconcilable with the miserable state of its outer wall.

Jarvis carefully surveyed the premises, and then, stepping to the door, gave two or three low knocks. Bill heard a sound within, as if an iron bar was being removed, and the door opened. All was dark—a word was whispered, and Jarvis, taking his protegee by the hand, led him through a dark and narrow passage, until he suddenly bade him halt and stand still until he returned. Bill heard his friend groping for a door, which was soon opened, and all was still as the grave.

After remaining some time in anxious suspense, a light streamed through the passage, and Jarvis advanced, bidding Darlington to follow. They entered an old but well furnished apartment, where no person was visible but an old crone who sat by the fire-place, smoking an ancient pipe, and who took no notice of those who entered. Her eyes were fixed sullenly on the hearth over which she bent, and her white hair streamed all unbound over her withered shoulders. At the sides of the room were a number of tables, on which were empty glasses and mugs, and all denoted that the apartment had but recently been vacated by quite a party of persons.

Jarvis told Bill to stand firm, for he was now about to be introduced to a jolly set of fellows, whom, if he did not fancy their appearance at first, he would not dislike on a better acquaintance. The burglar then proceeded to tie Bill's hands behind him, and to bandage his eyes, having done which he conducted him silently out of the room, and down a narrow flight of stairs. Bill knew by the dampness of the place, that that they were in a subterranean apartment and, by the distance they had descended, far below the surface of the street. A few yards were traversed as they reached the ground, and then came another pause. Three distinct raps were given, and a heavy iron door was heard to creak on its hinges. Although thickly blindfolded, Bill felt that he was now in a room brilliantly illuminated; and by the buzz that met his ear, he knew that there was no small number of persons around him.

"Silence!" said Jarvis, in a tone denoting authority. He then continued—"Boys, here is a friend who will make a true and faithful Blue. He is ready for initiation, and will now take the oath which has never been broken by any one of our gallant number. Priest, come forward!"

A man was heard to advance, who soon, in a deep guttural voice, proceeded to administer an oath of secrecy and of obedience, which, for inhuman ideas of penalty and for shocking terms of language, could not be exceeded in the infernal invention of the most notorious writers of immoral fiction. Bill was obliged to repeat it all, sentence by sentence; and when near the close, his hands were loosened from behind—one placed upon his heart, and the other upon what seemed to be the crossed blades of two huge knives.

This ceremony was finished, and the bandage was quickly removed from his eyes. Bill, at the sight that met his view, started with involuntary horror—but it was only momentary, and he then stood unmov-

al, gazing calmly on those about him. Forming a close circle around Darlington, stood, in every variety of threatening position, some twenty men of the most forbidding appearance. Each held in the air a glistening blade, or pointed at the head of the new initiate a brace of heavy pistols. Bill looked scornfully at their device to try his courage, and in a few minutes the weapons dropped, and he was grasped by the hand by each and all of the gang in turn. He was congratulated on his bold entrance to a new career, and informed that he must obey all commands of their chief, who was now introduced to Bill in the person of Jarvis, under the cognomen of *Captain Kit*.

Darlington received the congratulations of his new friends with considerable graciousness, and a bumper was drunk in his honor. The whole party then adjourned to the apartment above, where the old crone was roused from her lethargy by the fireside to attend to the various wants of the party, many of whom seemed disposed to spend the night in carousal, while others departed singly or in couples, probably on expeditions connected with their profession.

Jarvis, or Captain Kit, took Bill aside, and gave him much information concerning the previous operations of the gang—described the plans usually pursued, when a great “haul” was to be made—imparted some instruction as to how they avoided detection—and told many a glowing tale of booty divided, and the rich shares that fell to the members. Whenever a robbery was committed, the plunder was immediately conveyed to the Reach, put in possession of the captain, and at regular periods the whole was divided in equal shares. The gang was under the supreme control of the chief, who directed all movements, and sent men hither and thither as he had occasion, or as he gleaned intelligence of opportunities to commit depredation. The Captain concluded, by assuring Bill that if

he would follow his directions, he would soon become a “tip-top cracksman.”

Bill was now fairly in the net. He had gradually become a criminal at heart, if not in act. He had too long, in despair and desperation, suffered his mind to dwell on dishonest themes, and to dream over vague plans of obtaining money for himself and family. And this night, he had freely drank of the liquor proffered by his new companions, until he felt ready, under the inspiring influence of Captain Kit, to undertake anything suggested by the chief.

It was now after midnight. Kit looked hastily at the time-piece, and started to his feet.

“Bill,” said he, “I’ve got a job on hand to-night, and instead of my taking one of the old boys, you had better go with me.”

Assent was given, and Bill was armed with a pistol and a large clasp-knife such as he had seen in the hands of the gang at the time of his initiation.

“We’ve got a complete workshop down beneath,” said Kit, “where we make our tools and keys. See here—here’s one of my work; and what’s more, it will fetch the swag to-night.” So saying, he drew from his pocket a large key, which Bill curiously examined.

“Well, what is this for?” asked the novice.

“Come with me, and you’ll see,” was the reply. And the Captain stepped to a cupboard, took out a short iron bar curiously fashioned, put it under his coat, and commanded Bill to follow him.

Threading their silent way through the deserted streets, they gradually approached the Thames docks, where the large mercantile establishments reared their lofty roofs in the black shades of night. Frequently would they stop, while the captain bent down and listened. But nothing was heard save the distant echoes of their own footsteps. After a while, the captain cau

tioned Bill that they were near the building they were to enter. Bidding him halt, and stand in the shade of a doorway, until he heard a low whistle, Kit crept forward to survey the premises. Bill shortly heard the signal, and stepped stealthily in the Captain's direction. Kit expressed himself satisfied that no one was near to molest them.

Near where they stood was a very high oaken gate, opening to a narrow passage between two large warehouses. The Captain advanced to the gate, and taking out his iron bar, he jammed the sharp end of it between the edge of the gate and the casing, and with one strong wrench this barrier to their progress was overcome. A few moments more of watching and listening, and the pair proceeded down the alley a few yards, and again stopped.

"I've been getting ready for this job a se'n-night," said Captain Kit. "This window opens into the countin' house. I made up some business to go in there this morning and I know just how everything lays."

The window was guarded by heavy shutters, but they afforded the same vain resistance as the gate. A pane of glass was quickly broken, the sash was raised, and all was clear.

"Now Bill, you've got to learn sometime," said Kit, "so you may as well do the rest of this 'ere business." The captain drew a very small dark lantern from his pocket, and also a tinder box. Handing them to Bill, together with the key he had before shown him, Kit continued—"Now, Bill, you crawl in at the window, and when you get in strike a light; the big chest is under the desk in a corner—that 'ere key I'm d—d sure will fit it—clear the old box of its heavy bags, but don't "pull" anything else."

Bill stood for a moment without replying. He was ready to commit a crime—but perhaps he momentarily realized his now degraded position, and some "com-

punctious visitings of conscience" might have fluttered in his breast.

"Why, man," exclaimed the captain, somewhat piqued, "you ain't saying your prayers, are you? Here, I'll help you in!"

Bill recovered himself, and before Kit could give him a helping hand, with a single spring he was in the counting-house.

Once inside, Bill perhaps for a moment trembled. All was utter darkness—all was silent as the dreary tomb. His ear ached, as he vainly endeavored to catch the slightest sound. He felt that he was alone—that the contemplated deed might be performed in safety. But, as the first feeble flame glimmered on his candle, he saw the face of his own—Mary! No, it was but a flashing dream. Oh, would to God—thought Darlington—I were anywhere but here!

"What the d—l makes you so long!" came a shrill whisper in at the window; and Bill began to look about him for the chest. In a corner of the counting-house, under a massive oaken desk, he found the depository of the merchant's treasure. Bill took the key from his pocket, and kneeling down upon the sanded floor, he inserted it in the lock—he then lightly turned it, but it made some resistance. "It does not fit," thought Darlington.

"For G—d's sake, what are you about? Be quick!"—came again the devil's whisper through the window.

Bill, in desperation, grasped the key, gave a powerful wrench, and the bolt flew back. Holding his open lantern before him, he slowly raised the lid of the chest. There were the little leathern bags before him, and he knew that they contained gold. Oh, wealth unutterable! Bill convulsively clasped the nearest portion of the prize, and held the yellow bag up to the light. "100 g.," in black letters, met his eye. But there were much larger bags in the chest, and Bill began to take them out.

"Have you got the old box open?" came the hissing voice of Captain Kit.

Bill set his lantern on the floor, and grasping several of the bags of gold, he rushed to the window, and deposited them in the outstretched hands of the robber chief.

"Go it, my prave pal!" exultingly exclaimed the captain—"Don't leave more'n one little chap for a nest egg!"

Darlington returned to the chest, and in a very short space of time the whole booty was passed into the possession of Captain Kit. Emerging from the window, the shutters were closed, and Bill took a portion of the treasure they had so skilfully obtained.

Slowly and cautiously creeping through the streets, the successful burglars finally arrived at the Reach, where their booty was stored in a dark vault adjoining the lower cellar in which Bill had received his initiation.

As Bill's arms were relieved of their golden burden, he breathed freer, and began to think of home. It was the first time he had ever been absent from Mary at night, and what would she say! But crime had tainted his whole soul, and he now must tell the first lie that ever found its reluctant way to the innocent ear of Mary Livingston—the fondly loving woman who was now the unconscious partner of a confirmed robber, and the mother of an outlaw's children.

No doubt that vain remorse crawled like a hideous serpent in William Darlington's breast, as he bent his weary footsteps homeward. But Kit, as he left, had placed more golden guineas in his hand, and Bill rattled them cheerily in his pocket. It was music to his ear, but more like the sorrowful dirge over departed virtue

CHAPTER VII.

DARLINGTON AT HOME—ELECTED CAPTAIN OF THE BLUE BOYS—SEPARATION OF THE GANG—A GREAT ROBBERY—FLIGHT OF THE BURGLARS.

The sombre shadows of night were fast disappearing under the influence of the advancing morn, when Darlington entered the silent abode of all that was dear to him on earth.

Mary sprang to his arms with joy, and kissed his pale and haggard face. Sleepless had been the night to her, and she was weary with anxious watching. Where had William been?—But the question remained unanswered.

The burglar threw his tired form upon the bed, and slumbered until nearly mid-day. Waking, he found a warm and ample meal, which his fond wife had refused to touch until William could sit opposite to her, at the little unpainted table, and enjoy with her the nice food that he had purchased with his golden guinea—that guinea, alas! so fatal to the destiny of a once honest man.

Months passed away. William was a skilful and daring burglar. His naturally open and generous disposition, together with his shrewdness and bold exploits, had made him a favorite with the Blue Boys, who now looked upon him as the leading "crossman" of their gang.

It would be vain—and, in truth, it would be hardly in our power—to recapitulate the many and various scenes through which Darlington passed at this period of his criminal career. But Jarvis, alias Captain Kit, had become, as the leading members of the gang learned, a "spotted man" among the police, who were fast following on his trail. This information was derived from those interesting personages denominated "fences," or individuals whose business it was to buy stolen goods and receive and dispose of stolen money. The peril was

so imminent to the Blue Boys, that it was resolved that Captain Kit should take to himself a large share of the spoils in their possession, and flee from the country. He did so, and his after fate has ever since remained a profound mystery.

Suffice it to say, Bill was immediately and unanimously chosen their leader; all danger seemed averted, and they commenced a system of plunder on a most magnificent scale. Thousands of pounds sterling found its way to the secret vaults of the Robbers' Reach. Every street corner in London was emblazoned with big placards, offering heavy rewards for the detection of robbers and the recovery of stolen property. At a division of plunder, about this time, Bill's own share amounted to some two thousand pounds sterling, (or near ten thousand dollars American.) His impoverished home had put on the garb of neatness and comfort—Mary thought him most successful in some honest pursuit, and her pale cheeks began to assume the roseate tints of health and happiness.

But such an astonishing career of crime could not always meet with a favorable issue. Long success had emboldened the Blue Boys to such a degree, that they became careless and reckless in each day's enterprise. Sporting the finest clothes, they entered the most fashionable places of amusement in London—spent their money freely, and, when inebriated, spoke openly of the easy manner in which they obtained their wealth.

Only a few of the gang, under the cool leadership of Bill, remained steadfastly engaged in their unlawful profession. But they were doomed to suffer, partly through the incaution and recklessness of the remainder of the gang, but quite as much from their own daring and astounding exploits.

Captain Bill, (as he was called by his comrades,) with now but half a dozen confederates, were the sole tenants of the old "Reach." A great and final robbery was

contemplated; and it was then the intention of Bill to gather together his ill-gotten gains, and depart with his family for America. But the success to which he had become so accustomed, and which seemed almost the natural result of his unlawful enterprises, was now destined to vanish, and in its stead to bring penalty and disaster.

One of the principal banking-houses in London was selected as the scene of their last effort, and the robbers for several weeks used the utmost diligence in studying all peculiarities on the premises, and thoroughly learning the entire locality. Bill, with his gentlemanly appearance, and with the money he so easily commanded, not unfrequently made apparent business at the banking-house, and while there, amidst the hurry and bustle of 'change hours, his sharp eye rapidly observed the situation of the vault, and the strength of all the doors leading from the outside. At different times, Bill or his accomplices succeeded in taking wax impressions from the locks of the outer doors, and they finally were satisfied that they had all the keys necessary to afford them access by night to the interior of the banking-rooms. Strict watch also satisfied them that no person lodged in the building, and that the police, as they went their rounds, could be easily avoided. All things were now prepared, and the skilful burglars waited only for a dark and stormy night to carry their matured plans into operation.

The cold fog and drizzle of a November midnight dampened not the determined ardor of Bill and two of his most trusty confederates, as they sallied forth on their daring mission. Equipped with every instrument that their ingenuity had manufactured for the purpose, it was now the expectation of the party to commit the most extensive robbery that had ever astounded the business community, or shocked the authorities of London. It was in the secret

cellar of the Blue Boys's Reach, that were invented many of those singular specimens of ingenious mechanism—"billies" and "jimmies," "jacks," "braces," and "bits,"—that have for the last twenty years formed the paraphernalia of a burglar's outfit—and samples of which have not unfrequently been captured, and formed conspicuous curiosities not only in the "police office museums" of London, Edinburgh and Glasgow, but in the transatlantic cities of New York and Boston.

We need not here relate the cautious creeping of the gang towards their destination. All this, the reader can readily imagine.

Arrived at the door of the banking-house, after satisfying himself that the London night-watch had no representatives at present in that quarter, Bill ordered one of his company to keep "watch and ward" on the outside, while he and the other confederate entered the building, and "snatched the plunder." Bill's keys had not been fitted by any unskilful hands, and he readily found his way to the inner counting-room of the house. From underneath their great coats, they then drew forth their small but powerful tools, with the expectation of being obliged to force the door of the iron vault. Bill, however, first bethought him that he would examine the lock—but he did somewhat unconsciously, almost a matter of curiosity. By holding a candle to the key-hole, what was his surprise to find that the lock was a sample of the identical one he had invented while in the service of Mr. Burns. He knew too well the interior mechanism of its bolts and wards to require the assistance of any heavier tool than a small steel rod which he drew from his pocket. Inserting this in the key-hole, he began to "peg away," without uttering a word to his comrade, who stood in amazement and admiration at the cool and quiet proceedings of his chief. Presently the "Priest," for it was no

other than he, heard the sound of a bolt as it flew back in its socket—a moment more, and "snap" went another. The door of the vault was open, and Bill and the Priest entered.

Here was enough to excite the cupidity of a monarch. Here was gold and silver, in stout bags and small thick boxes—here were bundles of notes on the Bank of England, and business papers of immense value. The adventurous twain deliberately ransacked the contents of the vault, and proceeded to make a very judicious selection of such wealth as would be least apt to lead to their detection.

We will lightly pass over the incidents of this transaction. Suffice it to say, that ere the next twenty-four hours had passed into unredeemed space, the London journals recorded the imperfect particulars of a great and most astounding robbery. A large reward was offered, and the police were on the alert. The sum said to be stolen was thirty thousand pounds. The banking-house, which had been robbed, was closed, and the thousand friends and creditors of the institution were in a perfect tremor concerning the redemption of their deposited funds. Merchants and bankers were all alive to the excitement attendant on this great development of crime, and the chiefs of the London police were on the *qui vive* to ferret out the operators in the transaction. All this time, William Darlington, (or Captain Bill, of the Blue Boys,) was quietly making his arrangements for leaving London with his family and booty. And there can be no doubt that he would have successfully accomplished his object, but for the untoward circumstance we are about to mention.

As we said before, most of the gang, elated with their long success and present wealth, had neglected the customs and authority of their outlawed association and its chief, and were spending their booty in the most frequent and popular resorts in Lon-

don. This portion of the gang, of course, in common with every one else, read and heard with interest of the particulars of the late robbery, and, one evening, while their caution was drowned in drink, declared openly that the "haul" must have been made by *Captain Bill*—for nobody else did such "pulling business" in the way that this was accounted to be done. The remark was not lost upon those who were near by. There were two Bow street officers, who sat near at hand, in the crowded ale-house, sipping stupidly from their mugs, apparently unconscious of all that was going on around them. But their ears were wide open—they knew what they were about, and they took note of all that passed. In a corner of the room, not far distant, sat a grim and grey-haired man, with his pot of beer before him, lost, it would seem, in his own earnest meditation. But under that slouched hat and those false locks gleamed piercing eyes, and teemed listening ears. It was Captain Bill, who with his innate shrewdness and knowledge of the careless conduct of the deserters from his gang, kept track of their whereabouts, and preserved a strict watch on all their movements. Bill knew, also, the persons of the two Bow street officers, and he felt that the "game was up" with him and his followers. A few more such careless words as had dropped from the lips of the intoxicated burglars, and the police would derive information sufficient to put them immediately upon his trail. Putting on an air of inebriation, Bill rose and slowly staggered out of the room. Once outside, he stood a moment, to see that no one had followed him, and then struck a hasty pace towards the Reach.

Arriving at the door of the now almost deserted rendezvous, the old crone gave him entrance, and he immediately descended to the underground apartment, where by good luck, he found all of his remaining comrades. In hasty words, he related to them

the scene that was occurring at the ale-house, and earnestly warned them that the danger was imminent—suggesting an immediate division of their spoils, and instant flight. Bill stated his own determination to flee to America, and was desirous that the Priest should accompany him; while, if the others chose the same destination, he advised that they should take different ports of embarkation.

All the immense plunder in the Reach was brought forth, and an equitable division of the same was quickly made. Bill estimates the value of his share at that time to have been some £40,000, or \$200,000—at any rate enough to have made him quite a wealthy and respectable gentleman, could he have escaped to this country without detection.

But time was fast passing away, and Bill feared the almost inevitable pursuit of the police. The robbers gathered their booty together, and, with a trepidation they had seldom experienced, gave a hearty farewell to their captain, and left the premises. The Priest agreed to meet Bill in Liverpool on a certain day, and then departed.

The Captain was the last burglar left in the Reach. With his heavy load of plunder, he slowly ascended the stairs, and entered the main room, where sat, dozing before the fire, the old hag who for many years had been the mistress of the robbers' den.

Leaning over her shoulder, Bill said kindly—"Aunt, we're all about to leave you. Within twenty-four hours, the hounds will be after us;—they will come here and search the premises."

The only reply of the crone was a sort of low "Umph!" which rather signified indifference to anything that might occur.

"Can I do anything for you, Aunt?" proceeded Bill—"you want money don't you?"

No reply came from the old woman, as she rocked herself slowly over the hearth—

an old pipe in her mouth, and her head bowed down.

"Well, you must take this," said the robber chief—"You will want for food, and gin, and tobacco; and if you don't have money, what will you do?" And he took from his burden a bag of gold, and put it in her lap. The woman seemed for a moment to be more conscious of what was going on, and tightly clutched the bag in her bony fingers.

"Are you going?" she finally muttered.

"Yes," answered Bill, as he strode hastily from the room—"Good bye, my old dame!"

No response came, and Darlington, for the last time, left the Reach of the Blue Boys.

CHAPTER VIII.

BILL GOES TO LIVERPOOL—PREPARES TO LEAVE FOR AMERICA—BILL AND THE PRIEST ARE ARRESTED—DARING ESCAPE FROM LIVERPOOL JAIL.

Hurrying homeward, Darlington meditated a plan of escape. There was no time to lose—but the question arose, what should he do with Mary! If he took her with him, she would retard his arrangements and impede his progress. His determination was sudden but unalterable. He would make a plausible excuse for going a long journey—leave her ample resources in the way of money, and, when safely arrived in America, send for her to join him.

Trunks were procured, and packed with his stolen wealth, and Darlington was ready for departure. The farewell scene between him and Mary was touching in the extreme. Copious tears were shed, as he kissed his children for the last time, and with almost frantic energy the burglar tore himself away from all that he loved.

He was on his way to Liverpool. No

one would have supposed from his appearance that he was other than a gentleman of wealth and accomplishments, travelling perhaps on business or for pleasure. Always self-possessed, nothing in his manner was ever likely to betray him. But he knew that he was running a gauntlet of danger. At every tavern by the road side, where the coach stopped at intervals for a change of horses, Bill noticed the placards on the walls, offering a great reward for the detection of those who committed the last robbery of such magnitude in London. So far as known, no clue to the burglars had as yet been obtained. The robbery was the theme of travellers, and the country people listened with staring eyes and open ears to the many marvellous tales that were told of the way in which the robbers had obtained entrance to the banking-house. All this was quite edifying to Bill, who occasionally took part in the conversation, and exercised his natural roguery and invention in relating a number of extravagant and wonderful incidents as being connected with the robbery, all of which was greedily swallowed by his eager listeners.

On arriving in Liverpool, Mr. Conyng-ham (as Bill called himself,) took lodgings at one of the principal hotels, and forthwith proceeded to engage passage for New York in a packet ship that was to sail in a few days. The next day, the Priest made his appearance, and brought intelligence that members of the London police had left town for some of the principal sea-ports, and that one had even come up to Liverpool in the same coach with him. Here, then, was need of all their circumspection.

The day before the packet was to sail, as Bill and his favorite "pal" were sauntering through one of the principal streets, what was their surprise to suddenly hear behind them a familiar but drunken voice exclaim—

"Why, d—n my eyes, if there ain't Captain Bill and the Priest!"

Great was the chagrin of Bill, on turning around, to discover two of his old gang whom he had left in London—both in a state of intoxication. Grasping his hand rudely, they swore they were not yet going to leave him. Bill, however, shook them off, and earnestly remonstrated with them for their conduct—cautioning them that if they did not behave more discreetly they would ruin both themselves and him. The burglars whom he addressed, though good-natured, were boisterous in their manner, and the captain, afraid of attracting public attention, hurried from them.

This little incident, however, had not been unnoticed by a lynx-eyed man who had been quietly following the drunken robbers ever since morning. He heard them, as they exclaimed "Captain Bill!" and the title was not unfamiliar to his ears. Therefore, when Bill and the Priest started for their hotel, the police detector followed. He observed every movement, and in the course of the day learned that they were recently from London, that their baggage was large and heavy, and they were preparing to embark for America. The officer had a full description of the money recently stolen, and was in possession of many little particulars, gleaned from the drunken confessions of some of the Blue Boys, which tended to convince him that he had now the two principal participators in the late robbery within his grasp.

In company with two Liverpool officers, the London policeman that afternoon proceeded to the hotel, and inquired if Mr. Conyngham was in, and requested to be shown to his room.

Bill and the Priest were for a moment startled, as the officers entered their apartment. They felt that detection was come, and all their hopes were blasted. It was the first time that Darlington had ever felt the arresting hand of an officer laid upon his shoulder. His lip quivered but for an instant, and then the expression of his face

betokened nothing but coolness and resolution.

The burglars were abruptly informed of the reason of their arrest, and the police then proceeded to hand-cuff them.

"Well," said the Priest, "I didn't expect to wear the darbies quite so soon! Mr. Conyngham, what do you think of the iron wristbands?" and the priest smiled at his own attempt at a joke.

Bill coolly replied—"I don't think 'em very pretty ornaments for a gentleman's hand."

The officers winked at each other mysteriously, and one of them whispered—"Oh, you may depend on't, they're old birds!" They then began to examine the baggage of the two travelling gentlemen, and soon had the satisfaction of discovering more than enough to prove participation in merely one of the great robberies that had taken place in London. "This will be a fine feather in my cap," seemed to think the London policeman, as he coolly surveyed the enormous plunder.

The burglars were then conveyed to prison, and it was understood that they would be carried to London the next day. All Liverpool was agog; for the news spread like lightning, that two of the greatest London burglars had just been arrested at the Swan Hotel. The streets were thronged with a motley crowd of persons old and young, as the fettered culprits, in charge of the officers, emerged from the hotel, and passed on their way to the Bridewell. Every eye was strained to catch a glimpse of the prisoners, and various were the comments on their appearance that met the ears of both. The Priest laughed good-naturedly in the faces of the bystanders who stood with outstretched necks, gaping as they would at wild animals in a menagerie. But the stern features of the captain were unmoved, and his dark eye met calmly the gaze of the pressing crowd.

The prisoners were ushered to their

gloomy cell. Bill remained taciturn, and seemed completely lost to everything around him, while even the jolly disposition of the Priest seemed to have departed. But the latter soon began to move about, and appeared to be earnestly studying the securities of the place. The cell was about ten feet square—having no outlets but the heavy iron door, and a small grated window about eight feet from the floor.

“Say, captain,” said the Priest after a long period of silence—“don’t you believe we can get out of this infernal hole?”

Bill suddenly started, as if a new idea flashed upon his mind. He gave a questioning look at the Priest, but made no reply.

“See here,” continued the other—“I can slip my darbies”—and, suiting the action to the word, he dexterously twisted his hands, and the iron cuffs dropped from his wrists.

The captain sprang to his feet with an exclamation of surprise, and soon, with the assistance of his comrade, his own hands fell free at his side.

Bill then began to examine for himself the strength of their cell. But he felt it was in vain to endeavor to seek egress from the door. The lock could not be reached from the inside, and he knew too well the mechanism of such an affair to attempt an escape in that quarter. An examination of the stone walls satisfied them that the jail was an old one; with the handcuffs they believed that, had they time, they could even force a sufficient aperture in the wall—but they had only a few hours to work in, and they must be quick.

Pulling a little bench to the wall, and setting it on an end, Bill mounted to the window, which was about two feet wide, and apparently strongly guarded by thick iron bars. Bill peered through the window, and saw that it was but an easy jump to the ground. A few feet distant there was a high wall, and he felt conscious,

from the frequent rumbling of wheels, that this was the only barrier between the prison and the street. Grasping one of the window gratings, he found it to be a little loose in its socket.

“Here, my pious pal!” exclaimed the captain—“just pass me up one of those darbies, and I’ll soon see what this stone and mortar is made of!”

Having received the uncouth tool, he began cautiously and with as little noise as possible to pick out and knock away the crumbling cement and stones that formed a socket for the end of one of the gratings. Bill every few minutes would stop and listen, and the Priest would apply his ear to the door, but they heard no sounds that would lead them to believe they had so far been detected. Pretty soon, one end of a bar was free, and with a powerful wrench the other followed. Bill jumped to the floor, and waved the heavy iron over his head in triumph. But one more was to be removed, and the Captain directed the Priest to finish the job. In the meantime, Bill made himself very busy in tearing up some of the under-garments of himself and pal, and twisting them into a sort of clumsy rope. In one end, he tied a large fragment of stone, and then pronounced his work complete.

The second grating, after a good deal of hard work on the part of the Priest, was removed, and the aperture was sufficiently large to admit of their crawling through.

When the neighboring church clock was heard to strike eleven, Bill volunteered to lead the way, and mounted to the window. With difficulty crawling through the opening, he put out his head to survey the scene as well as the faint light of the moon would permit. The wall in front of him appeared to be the rear boundary of the prison, and if this should prove so, Bill thought, the chances of escape were very good.

It required a good deal of bending

squeezing to get his body into such a position that he should not drop to the ground head foremost. He finally succeeded, and soon found himself on terra firma. The Priest, who was rather more burly than Bill, did not get through the gratings quite so easily, and when he had got clear, came tumbling to the ground in a manner that made Bill fear his comrade had driven all breath from his body. But the Priest, with a few muttered curses, managed to pick himself up, and found no bones broken, though he was not a little bruised.

Now Bill's rude rope was to come in play. The wall before them was at least twelve feet high, and so smooth as to bid all defiance to climbing. But on the top was a thick row of high iron spikes, and by throwing his rope just over the top of the wall, the stone that was fastened in the end caught outside, and became firmly attached. The athletic captain then sprang to the top of the wall without difficulty, and assisted the Priest in his ascent. Transferring their ingenious ladder to the opposite side, they were not slow in congratulating themselves on their thus far successful escape from Liverpool jail.

On being imprisoned, they had been searched, and everything taken from them but a few small pieces of coin. Although they had now rid themselves of prison bars, they were still in a perilous dilemma. Their first impulse, however, was to hurry to the outskirts and poorer quarters of the town—while the minds of both were busy in cogitating plans for the future.

After walking some distance through dirty streets and narrow lanes, they agreed to find some hiding place until daylight, and then trust to luck. They soon came across an old half-ruined stable which appeared to be entirely unoccupied. They found easy access to the place, and their way into the loft. Throwing their weary forms upon the rough floor, they could not

long resist the impulses of nature, and were soon fast asleep.

When the daring fugitives woke from their sound slumbers, it was nearly mid-day. Peeping out from the cracks of their hiding place, they could see nothing but the miserable habitations of the most wretched class of people. Feeling somewhat safe in this quarter, it was agreed that they should venture out, and at some low ale-house in the neighborhood procure refreshment. Arranging and even soiling their imperfect dress in such a manner as not to attract suspicion, they crept from the place of their retreat.

CHAPTER IX.

THE REWARD—ARRESTED AGAIN—CARRIED TO LONDON—BILL IN NEWGATE—TRIAL AND CONVICTED—SENTENCED TO BOTANY BAY.

Assuming a careless and sauntering air, the burglars walked along until they reached a dingy-looking pot-house, which they entered, and called for food and drink. Seating themselves at a table in the most retired part of the room, they eagerly devoured the plain but substantial food that was afforded, and began to make themselves quite comfortable and contented over a pot of beer.

"One hundred pounds reward!" suddenly exclaimed an unshaven, slovenly-dressed man, as he strode into the house, and walked towards the bar. "Say, old Pewter, h'aint you heard the news?"

The landlord had not heard the news, and he therefore opened wide his eyes, and pricked up his ears, and relieved himself of the monosyllable "No!" Some half a dozen ragged tipplers gathered round impatient to learn what the great reward was all about, while the stranger proceeded slowly to draw forth a huge placard, and then began to read it to his admiring au-

dience. So many hiccups from the reader and so many exclamations of wonder from his listeners, prevented Bill and the Priest from hearing every word, but their ears undoubtedly caught the most interesting portions of the document.

“One hundred pounds reward!—Escaped last night—Liverpool jail—two notorious burglars—one short and thick—dark complexion—Captain Bill—alias Wharton—Conyngham—the other tall—large man—vicious look—whoever will arrest—give information—above reward—jailor—Bride-well.”

Such was the substance of the placard, heard by the two self possessed gentlemen who had suddenly become the theme of popular curiosity and excitement. A look significant of caution glanced from Bill to his comrade, and they continued quietly drinking and conversing. Their thoughts naturally were as to what should be done next to complete their escape, and they finally determined to make their way, travelling only by night, to some distant country town, where they could obtain some mechanical employment—provided no opportunity in the meanwhile offered for them to “lift the lush” in their old professional manner.

Towards dusk, they prepared to leave the pot-house. Paying their small bill, they advanced confidently to the door, and were about to depart, when whom should they meet, to their horror and surprise, standing directly in their path, with his lynx-eyes fixed steadily upon them, the same London policeman who had first arrested them.

“Ah, my fine birds, said the officer, “I thought you could’nt be far off. You will accompany me to London to-morrow, sure.” Assistance was called from without, and the burglars saw that it was in vain to resist the minions of the law. Again hand-cuffed they were conveyed to the prison, and locked up in a cell from which there was

no escape. Heavy irons were placed upon them, and the prisoners felt that they must stand at the Bailey bar, and perhaps be “pinched for life.”

The next day, loaded with chains, the gaze and wonder of the populace, Bill and the Priest were taken from their cell, and in charge of a posse of police, conveyed on their way to London. Arrived at the metropolis, they were thrown into the strongest hold of Newgate, to await their trial at the approaching term of the New Bailey sessions.

Bill was cool, and stern, and as undaunted as ever. Though despairing somewhat of his fate, he had lost none of his intrepidity and resolution, and he was alive to every hope of escape. Both he and his companion had heavy irons on their wrists, which were brought almost together by a short chain; and on their ankles another set of gyves were so attached as to barely enable them to walk. The only light afforded the cell was through a very small and thickly grated aperture at least twelve feet from the floor, and to which there was no means of ascent.

“Well, captain,” remarked the Priest, after carefully surveying his fastenings—“We shan’t break these strings quite as easy as we did at Liverpool!”

“No,” said Bill—“but if I only had one of old Burns’s files, I’d show the dogs what we are made of!” And with a desperate motion he wrenched his arms, as if he would have torn his chains asunder. But they were too strong to yield, and the captain fell back silent and moody.

The outer door of their cell was made of thick oak, crossed and bound by iron bands; while the inner door was entirely of iron. As they were led to their cell, the burglars carefully noted everything on the way, and they now felt that it was next to impossible to effect an escape. This, however, did not deter them from continually working at the irons which bound them. Bill, par-

ticularly made himself very busy, hour after hour, in rubbing the thinnest portion of one of his "darbies" against the edge of a thick iron band that was riveted over the lock in the door. Pressing with all his strength, he would file away until the perspiration poured down his face, and he would throw himself exhausted on the pile of straw that served him for a bed. For a day or two he scarcely made any perceptible impression on his fetters, but gradually he could see the bright line deepen, and felt that with a little more labor the cuff on one hand would be severed. He hardly knew what was to be accomplished, but the operation gave employment to body and mind, and so he kept on. He finally got one hand free, and it gave him considerable satisfaction, as he said, to "know that the d—d hounds couldn't always hold him tight!" He then went to work on the other "darby," and would soon have rid himself of that, but for a strict examination of the prisoners' irons that was suddenly commenced by the turnkey. The break in Bill's cuffs was detected, and he was bound more securely than ever.

The day of trial came. The proceedings were brief and conclusive, and Bill was sentenced to Botany Bay for fourteen years. The Priest received a similar award, but was to be sent to a different destination. They were carried back to Newgate, separated, and confined in solitary cells. Bill never saw the Priest again, nor did he ever hear of his fate.

Crime had not yet so hardened the heart of the convict, as to cause him to lose all memory and love of Mary. Her image floated ever before him, and if ever a tear moistened the cheek of the great burglar, it was when, within the cold walls of that prison, he pondered on his long banishment from his native soil, and thought of the desolate, broken heart of the fair idol of his youth.

From the commencement of our sketch,

we have generally designated our hero by the name of Darlington—that, perhaps, being more familiar to our readers than any other. But the name he had assumed on entering his criminal career was as unknown to Mary, as was his first *alias* unknown to even his own parents. It was therefore that Bill somewhat rejoiced at the thought that Mary would never learn of his felon's fate. She might pine in anguish for the return of her first and fatal love, but she would never be bowed down in sorrow in the knowledge that her William was a notorious robber—a condemned felon—a convict at Botany Bay. Her trusting heart would still look upon him, in the sad memory of years, as an honest man.

CHAPTER X.

THE CONVICT SHIP—BOTANY BAY—THE FELON'S LABOR—BILL MEETS WITH SOME OF HIS PROFESSION—HE RECEIVES FIFTY LASHES—CONTEMPLATES AN ESCAPE—ANOTHER TERRIBLE WHIPPING.

It was night upon the waters—the murky clouds were scudding like evil spirits between the earth and stars—the giant masts strained and creaked, as the fierce night wind drove the black convict ship onward over the sea, far, far from England's shores—the convict ship, with its sad freight of chained and fettered men. There in their narrow confines—that living tomb on the vast deep—there, bound like wild beasts of prey, were the young in crime, and the hoary-headed outlaw; the man in his prime, full of vigor and strong in limb, and the decrepid wretch who had grown grey in all the phases of London villany; ay, and there were mere striplings, whose first petty theft had brought them to the convict's doom—all banished from their mother earth, to delve like brutes, for many a long and weary year, and perhaps for

life, in the penal settlements of New South Wales.

But there was one, whose manly form no fetters could bow down—whose dark eyes flashed contemptuously, as he gazed upon the cursing, groaning crowd around him. His compressed lips and frowning brow spoke more than any one there could fathom. Too proud to rid himself of his accursed life—too vindictive to feel resignation to his fate—full of hate and calm desperation—William Darlington waited, without a murmur, his unhappy destination. The storm that rocked the deep, and cast the convict ship like a bubble on its mighty waves, brought no utterance to the silent tongue of the moody man—and the bright sunlight, when allowed to stream down through the grated hatchway, beamed only on a face unmoved, dark, and ominous.

“Land ho!” from the mast-head, after a weary voyage, brought no light of joy to the eyes of the strange man—while around him were those who exulted at the cry, happy for a change of scene, and to be freed from the crowded and loathsome prison-house of the sea.

Port Sydney! Was this to be Darlington's home for fourteen long years! The thought would have been almost death to any other man—but as for him, a desperate hope flickered like a mysterious flame in the chambers of his soul, and when, ushered by armed men to the boat that was to convey a portion of the convict gang to shore, he trod erect and firm, with noble bearing, and an eye that even awed the guards who walked at his side.

Bill, as one of the most notorious criminals sent recently from England, was placed at the hardest and most degrading labor in vogue at the colony—in the mines, down far into the bowels of the earth, away from all gleam of sunlight, amid noxious vapors, and nothing for his nightly couch but the hard damp soil in which he delved. But

his spirit was not yet crushed. Calmly he went to his toil—calmly he bore all hardships and privations. There was a volcano in his breast, which for a time he could quench—an indomitable spirit which he could beat down in his bosom and cause to slumber. Apparently, to the eyes of those who kept their constant guard, he went resigned and cheerily to his daily task; they began to think he was not the desperado they took him for; while Bill, industrious and peaceful, longed for one more glimpse of daylight and one more draught of the free air of heaven.

For nearly a year and a half, Bill toiled in the subterranean place, when, his good conduct having been occasionally reported to the Governor, he was taken from the mines, and promoted to more pleasant labor on the surface of the earth. Here was a step gained, and he began to feel a little encouraged. Time passed on, and Bill was favored with many privileges in consequence of his quiet behavior. He was allowed a little more liberty, and had opportunity of making such acquaintances as came in his way. His reputation as a “cracksman,” and as a “captain of the cross,” had come with him from England, and as here were a plenty of the same daring profession, Bill was instantly sought out as a pal. It was at Botany Bay that Bristol Bill became acquainted with a number of celebrated burglars and pickpockets who have since visited this country. Among them was William Thetford, an English crossman, known in this country as Bill Hoppy—now in Sing Sing state prison, for the robbery of Rockwell's jewelry store in New York. The notorious pickpocket, Billy Fish, was also at Botany Bay, and looked up with considerable respect to the accomplished Captain Bill. Then there was James Downer, sometimes called Cupid, who afterwards proved a “staunch” man to Bill—for when Downer and three others were convicted of the great Poughkeepsie barg

robbery. in New York, Bristol Bill, who was the leader in the business, went scot free, not one of his accomplices "peaching on him." When these various personages afterwards met in the city of New York, crime in Gotham began to take a wide range, and the most stupid of the police were not slow in observing that a new, daring, and skilful combination of thieves had commenced a system of operations widely differing from the frequent bungling performances of their predecessors.

The most hopeful of the convicts at Port Sydney were occasionally taken from the work-gangs, and joined to the day or night watch—their duty being to preserve order and discipline in certain defined localities. This promotion generally tended to shorten the term at Botany Bay of those convicts who properly conducted themselves. It was not long, therefore, that Bristol Bill, as an encouragement for his apparently good endeavors, was placed as a watchman at night over certain ware-houses. There were few persons that Bill liked, and none that he feared, in the whole colony: and he therefore attended strictly to his duty, not unfrequently preventing depredations from being committed by those who roamed abroad at night.

But one night, as Bill was slowly going his rounds, he spied two men emerging from the forced door of a warehouse in which was stored a large quantity of tobacco. Hastening to the spot, he intercepted the thieves, and caused them to drop their plunder. One of the parties, however, proved to be a jolly sort of a fellow whom Bill had known in the mines, and he was very easily induced to let his prisoners depart in peace with their stolen weed. But in the morning, traces of the robbery were apparent, and Bill was looked to for an explanation. Nothing was to be elicited from him, however. The overseer of the district, satisfied that the watchman knew of the robbery, threatened Bill with a flogging

if he did not divulge the names of the culprits. But he remained silent and resolute. The overseer ordered him to the whipping post; his back was bared, and the lash was raised; but nothing escaped his lips. Bill had never before been struck by mortal man. This was the hardest scene through which he had been called to pass—but he had pledged his word not to betray the men who had committed a petty theft, and that was enough for him. Down came the cutting lash on his unshielded flesh—fifty blows were given with all the strength and ferocity possible to the brute whose only profession it was to lash like beasts those human beings who came bound to the whipping-post. Gore covered the body of the indomitable man, but through his set teeth came no confessing words. He was then released, and sent again to work in the road-gang.

Five years passed on. Bill had ever dreamed of escape from that hell of the world, but he could see no opportunity. He had vague ideas of escaping to some other port on the island, but his want of "free papers" would have exposed him if he ventured into any settlement. He therefore calmly waited for such fortune as time might throw in his way.

The lash had not tended to increase the gentleness of Bill's temper—it was a stigma that could never be wiped out from his memory—it made him now moody, and then passionate—increased his vindictiveness, and made him more and more restless under the burden of his daily life. It was in one of his worst fits of morbid melancholy, that he neglected his usual task, and was brutally reprimanded by a subordinate overseer. Stung to the quick by the insulting language he received, Bill, in a frantic moment sprang upon the man, and, seizing him by the throat, hurled him senseless to the ground. Bill was immediately seized by the guard, and sent before the Governor. A brief examination, and he was

sentenced to receive five hundred lashes, and Botany Bay to be his home for life. The unfortunate man heard his sentence, but his lip quivered not, nor did his eye grow dim. The sentence was carried into execution, and Bill was taken from the whipping-post almost senseless, and covered with blood. His back—which to this day shows the marks of the horrible punishment—was frightfully disfigured, the skin and flesh being literally cut into rags. As before, he bore every fall of the lash without a groan, and it appeared as if he possessed almost superhuman endurance and fortitude.

As might have been expected, this last severe punishment tended not to make Bill a better man. Still cool and determined—but with all the ferocity of a tiger—Bill strove to bide his time.

CHAPTER XI

BILL PLANS AN ESCAPE FROM BOTANY BAY—IS FINALLY SUCCESSFUL—GOES ON A WHALING VOYAGE—ARRIVES AT NEW BEDFORD.

Port Sydney was not unfrequently visited by vessels of all nations, for the purpose of procuring wood and water; and rarely a week elapsed that did not see in the Bay some American whaler cruising in the South Pacific. It was by a ship of the latter class that Bill had often contemplated an escape from the infernal region to which he had been doomed for life. But the strictest watch was preserved by the captain of the port and the numerous armed guards, and it was not an easy thing to avoid their vigilance. Besides, all foreign vessels were required to anchor a certain distance from shore, and receive their supplies by boats, which were always closely scrutinized. Notwithstanding all this, the escape of a convict had not unfrequently occurred, and it was well known that Amer-

ican whaling masters, particularly when their crews had been reduced, were not extremely averse to the reception on board their craft of any able-bodied man, even though he be a fugitive from Botany Bay. Not a few of the notorious villains now in this country have made their exodus in this manner from the penal settlements belonging to Great Britain. And it may not appear singular that masters of whaling vessels generally look upon these escaped convicts as their best and most trusty men. The contrast of life on the open sea, with a weary existence of slavery in a penal colony, makes the fugitive's heart beat with joy; the love of liberty, and the hope of seeing a country where danger is for a time at an end, makes him go to his task on shipboard with a vigor and alacrity unknown to the poor men who have shipped from the States. They are, in fact, generally the most obedient and orderly of the crew, and a captain has seldom had cause to regret that he has taken an escaped convict on board.

It was with this knowledge that Bristol Bill determined to make an attempt for freedom, even if that attempt cost him his life. Walking daily as near the landing as he was permitted to go, he made every quiet endeavor to glean information concerning the ships in port.

Six years of banishment had nearly elapsed, before Bill began to realize any practical method of escape. He had learned that a New Bedford whaling ship was lying about four miles from land. He had watched the vessel with straining eyes for nearly a week, and by certain signs he knew that she was making preparations for departure. But how could he surmount one distance between her and the shore? If he succeeded in that, how could he tell out that he might be delivered up to undergo new tortures? All boats employed in the Bay were strictly guarded at night, and it would be in vain to attempt to gain posses-

sion of one. But the love of liberty was too strong, and the hopes of escape too infatuating, for Bill to forego a trial. He came to the determination to make the desperate attempt, under cover of night, of swimming to the ship. He was strong and athletic, and he thought his life might as well be lost in trying to gain his freedom, as to have strength and all that was human slowly sacrificed to the horrible tyranny of Botany Bay.

Ere dark, Bill scrutinized well the position of the whaler, and with his keen eye measured his course. He saw that the sails were flapping idly on the spars, and the vessel was evidently waiting only for a wind. No time was to be lost, and as soon as the shades of night had settled heavily over the sky, Bill crept cautiously from the miserable hut allotted him as a habitation, and began to make his way towards a distant point of the shore. It was a difficult matter to pass the various lines of armed guards and the ever vigilant night watch, but Bill, with the stealthy pace of a cat, and by frequently crawling on his hands and knees, gradually made his successful progress to the water's edge, at a considerable distance from the usual point of landing. The dark waters of the Bay rolled gloomily before him, and not a speck on their broad breast could he discover. But nothing could now intimidate; and, with only a few faintly glimmering stars for his guide, the intrepid fugitive plunged boldly into the sea. Stoutly did his lusty sinews buffet the waves, and bright hopes added to his strength as he swiftly rode the tide. Striking out in the direction where he supposed the vessel to lay, Bill tired and despaired as he kept on his fearful course amid the darkness. By using his strength discreetly, he trusted he should be able to reach the whaler before she sailed—but if he had mistaken his course, or his weary limbs should tire of their office, then the dark depths of the sea must be his eternal

grave. Hope—desperation—horror of the past—everything that life and freedom could promise—nerved him to the daring task. As he began to grow weary, he turned upon his back, and with an easy motion of his hands would barely float along, allowing himself such intervals of rest as were actually required by his almost superhuman exertions. As he looked upwards to the heavens, what was his joy to discover that one by one the stars grew brighter and that the misty clouds which had overshadowed the sky were slowly melting away. Pretty soon the pale moon began to peep lovingly out from the sable curtains that hid her face, and cast her sweet radiance gently over the waters. Bill turned again his strong breast to the waves, and struck cheerily out. He had not exaggerated the distance, and after two hours swimming, he felt that had he come in the right direction, he must be somewhere in the vicinity of the whaler. But as yet he could see no signs of her, nor could he hear the slightest sound that would be expected to come from a craft making preparations to sail. But Bill kept bravely on, as the moonbeams streamed brighter on his path—no faint heart had he, and his eyes peered steadily over the waves that now began to increase their motion as they felt the rising breeze from off the shore.

But ah! what is that, looming into the clouds, as if a magic mantle had been suddenly drawn from before it. It is the American whaler, whose rigging, traced against the sky, seems the summit of all hopes to poor Bill, whose strength is fast failing him. But the sight revives his weary limbs, and he continues with lusty strokes to make his steady way onward. Soon he hears the voices of the crew, and by the "yo! heave ho!" that falls distinctly on his ear, he knows the vessel is about to depart.

"Ahoy there." bellowed Bill with all his lungs, as a despairing vision crossed

his mind. "Ahoy!"—but no answer came and he exerted all his little remaining strength to get nearer the ship. "Ahoy!" he cried once more, almost in a tone of agony—and then he strained his ear over the silent waters to listen for a reply. He could not swim much further—his legs hung almost listless beneath him, and his arms ached sorely.

But the sailors heard his despairing cry, and back came their welcome "Ahoy!" Bill felt as if new life was thrilling in his veins, and he began again to buffet his way. "Help—help!" he cried, and soon was heard the sound of a boat as it was lowered into the water, and the plashing of the oars as the crew made their swift way towards the panting fugitive.

Lusty arms lifted the escaped convict into the boat, and the exhausted man sank senseless into the bottom of the boat. Aboard ship, and a kind draught of brandy enabled him ere long to tell the whaling master his story. The daring, extraordinary feat he had just performed was enough to excite the admiration of the crew, and it was agreed by the captain that Bill should take his place in the fore-castle at the terms usually allowed "green hands."

The breeze came fresh and brisk from off the shore, the sails were set, the yards braced, and the whaler was off on another cruise in the hunting regions of the South Pacific.

Bristol Bill began to feel like a man—the dogged moroseness that had characterized him for three or four years began to wear off, and he gradually assumed the cheerful disposition most natural to him. There was not a more active man on board ship than he. In the raging storm he was foremost there was no danger too imminent for him to brave. Apt to learn, and quick to execute, he soon became as expert in his new profession as the oldest of the crew. When the well-manned boat was gliding like a sea-bird over the waves, in pursuit of the

monsters of the deep, he was the cool, intrepid, acknowledged leader;—when the right moment came, his was the strong and steady arm that poised the fatal spear, and his the flashing eye that sent the swift harpoon to the vitals of his gigantic victim. Bill was the hero of the crew. He began to like the free life of the ocean—the ever restless waters, and the howling of the midnight storm—the scenes of danger and adventure—all suited the nature of the man, for his soul fed on excitement, and he lived in a constant dream of all that was heroic.

Eighteen months thus passed by, and the whaler was on its way home. Bill was about to set his feet on a new soil. What was to be his career in this country he scarcely thought—but he had vague ideas of a future life of honesty, and we doubt not, had favorable circumstances attended him, he would have become a useful member of society, and all his deeds of crime have been shrouded in oblivion.

"Home—home!" cried many of the crew joyfully, as the roofs and spires of New Bedford glistened in the setting sun, while the well-freighted whaler went gaily gliding into the harbor, the welcome visitor to many a waiting and anxious heart. But Bill began to feel sad—he stood leaning against the taffrail, silent and melancholy. He was alone in a strange land—a burglar by profession, and a fugitive convict from Botany Bay. But he trusted to luck, and meant not to starve. He was roused from his reverie by the order to let go the anchor, and Bill sprang to join in the duty.

The next day the crew were set at liberty, and, as is not unfrequent on such occasions, considerable disturbance occurred at the counting-room of the owners. Those of the crew who were expecting large sums as the reward for a three years voyage suddenly found strange figures set against them on the ship's books, and were turned off with a dollar where they expected twenty. But there was no redress, and the poor

fellows went cursing on their way—soon drowning all in a “hard spree ashore.” Bill, from the promises made him, had looked for quite a snug little sum, but the owners knew nothing about him, and grumbled at finally getting rid of him by the payment of only about five dollars. Bill pocketed, with a show of gratitude, his slim finances, and began to think how he should commence a new chapter in his eventful life.

CHAPTER XII.

BRISTOL BILL'S CAREER IN AMERICA—FIRST ARRIVAL IN BOSTON—ROBBERY OF AN APOTHECARY—BILL LIVES IN HIGH STYLE—RESUMES HIS OLD PROFESSION.

We have now to attempt to describe the adventurous career of the celebrated burglar in America, and it is by no means an easy task. It is impossible for the author to thoroughly, and with exact dates, trace out all the exploits of Bristol Bill in this country, for the reason that the skilful robber so shrewdly performed his business that he remained for years unknown to the police; the only records of crime, therefore, in which appear the names or known aliases of Bristol Bill, are of but recent date—leaving some four or five years of his career wrapped in profound mystery, except where occasional light has been thrown on the period by the confessions of himself and pals. We cannot here refrain from alluding to some remarks made by the New York chief of police a year or two since. For some four years the most daring and the heaviest robberies in New York and Brooklyn had baffled all the cunning and scrutiny of the police to discover the perpetrators. There was a peculiarity about these burglarious operations which could not escape notice—no trace was ever left behind which could lead to the detection of

the robbers. After a while, by some unknown means, the chief of police became aware of the fact that a man, known among the “cross” as Bristol Bill, was in the city, and by some was suspected of committing many of the recent robberies. Quite a system of espionage was instituted, and it was a long time before the police became aware that a certain gentlemanly-looking man, whose person they had long known, was none other than the illustrious Bill. After this they watched in vain, but nothing in his manner or habits, indicating crime, could they detect. The same scientific system of burglary continued, and the same mystery hung over each operation of “lifting the lush.” Bill meanwhile, by day, coolly walked the streets, not at all ignorant that a policeman was silently dogging him as he went. Bill carelessly puffed his cigar, and the spy had only his pains for his reward—for when it behooved Bill to leave the company of his follower, he would suddenly turn and face the policeman, and before the spy recovered his self-possession Bill would be lost to his view.

It would be in vain to endeavor to enumerate all the robberies of note committed by the subject of our sketch—but we believe, on good authority, that within the last six years upwards of thirteen Banks in the United States were forcibly entered and robbed by Bristol Bill; while the number of stores in the various cities, which contributed largely to the valuable booty of our robber, are almost without number. With such a “fence” as Sam Drury and others, to “smash his plunder” on, Bill had little else to look to than the skilful performance of the robberies themselves.

We left Bill at New Bedford, just discharged from a whaler, with only a few dollars in his pocket, and undetermined as to his future course. He, however, came to Boston, in his sailor rig, and put up at a seaman's boarding-house in Richmond street. He walks about the city, and the

sight of wealth as displayed in shop windows, served soon to revive a taste for his old profession, and becoming nearly destitute of funds, he watched a favorable opportunity for clandestinely "raising the wind."

A well-known apothecary, on Washington street, had the honor of being the first victim of Bristol Bill in this country—although the gentleman has probably not hitherto been aware who his plunderer was. Bill, late one afternoon, entered the shop, and called for a glass of soda. While there, a person came in and addressed the proprietor, informing him that he wished to "take up that note of \$300." The two gentlemen stepped to the desk, the business was settled, and Bill saw the keeper of the store put a large roll of bills in a pocket-book, which he then placed in the desk. That night, the door of the place was skillfully forced, and the money was stolen. All endeavors of the police to discover the robber were in vain. Bill was now flush, and he began to assume the gay airs which have always characterized him in his hours of success.

Procuring a fashionable wardrobe, and a moderate amount of baggage, he proceeded to Providence for a few days, and then returned to Boston, putting up like a very discreet gentleman at the Tremont House. While in Providence, whom should he meet but the celebrated Bill Hoppy, who had escaped from Botany Bay but a short time after Bristol Bill. The two burglars shook hands on their meeting, and it was agreed that they should join each other. Bill was introduced to two or three American cross-men, whom Hoppy pronounced "square," and also made acquainted with a certain jeweller who acted as a "fence." Feeling that he was not quite alone in his profession, and somewhat encouraged by the "fence," Bill, under the name of Elliot, took up his quarters at the Tremont House, intending for a while to take a survey of things in general.

Some months elapsed before Bill ventured upon another robbery. He was sadly in want of the necessary tools to carry on successfully his burglarious schemes, but by degrees he gathered together such as he thought would answer his purpose, and in a month or two, his money being nearly gone, he began to prepare for business. A boarder at the Tremont House, he was far above suspicion, and from his safe height he watched like an eagle his prey. On the opposite corner of Beacon street, under the Albion, was Mosely's jewelry store, and the windows thereof teemed with every variety of valuable goods. This store was selected by Bill as the first scene of his scientific operations. One dark and rainy night, Bill left the Tremont House, and, after carefully surveying the premises for some time, advanced to the door of Mosely's store, and by dint of his tools forced the lock, and entered. His selection of goods was shrewdly made—taking the most valuable gold watches, and only rich goods of small compass, their total value amounting to several thousand dollars. Arranging them about his person, and carrying a portion in his arms, wrapped in a handkerchief, Bill quietly passed unnoticed to his room in the Tremont. Startling was the announcement, the next day, of the great robbery. Crowds gathered around and gaped in at the windows of the store that was said to be robbed, while police officers, looking very sagacious, crept mysteriously through the streets. The excitement blew over, and days and weeks passed, but no clue to the robber was obtained.

A few days before this affair, Bill had traded for a watch, at a store under the Franklin House, and found himself, as he thought, somewhat cheated. So he determined to pay off the jeweller in the following manner. The very next night after the Mosely robbery, Bill broke into the store, and helped himself to a choice lot of jewelry. This burglary, like the other, was

complete, and no traces were left behind for detection. In a few days, with his two lots of plunder Bill and his baggage were on the road to Providence, where the "fence" did him good service by taking everything off his hands, and paying in exchange about five thousand dollars in current money.

Bristol Bill was now pretty well off, and treading on comparatively safe ground. He was entirely unknown to the police of the country, and his behavior was so discreet as never of itself to attract suspicion.

He next proceeded to New York, and while there made the acquaintance of Bob Whelan, the "old man of the cross," or, in other words, the oldest and most notorious member of the honorable fraternity of burglars. Bill also gained the affections, about this time, of a young "girl of the town," named Catherine Davenport; and she afterwards became his mistress, and served as an accomplice in many of his felonious operations.

In one instance, Catherine made herself particularly useful to Bill. He had kept his eye for some time on a rich lace store in Broadway, but could not himself obtain an opportunity to fit a key to the door. The girl was provided with the necessary means, and, under pretence of making purchases, paid several visits to the store. In the busiest and most fashionable hour of the day, when the attendance of ladies were large, and the doorway thronged, Catherine obtained a wax impression of the key to the principal door, and hurried with it home. Bill found a key which nearly answered his purpose. Covering the wards of the key with a thin coat of wax, he directed the girl to again visit the premises, and, when unobserved, to insert the key in the lock, and by turning it obtain a distinct impression of such parts as obstructed

.. She was again successful in her mission and Bill so filed the key, that on a

future visit Catherine found she could turn the bolt. A few nights after that, there was a heavy robbery of goods at this same lace store. The police examined the premises—saw the place had been entered by false keys—shook their heads, and never found out the perpetrator.

It appeared that Catherine Davenport had previous to her acquaintance with Bill, been acting in another criminal sphere, under the tuition of skilful and experienced masters—such as Joseph C. Ashley, Samuel Drury, and others of the like kidney. Kate, with her sweet face and winning ways, was an apt creature for a *koneyacker*, and proved very successful in "passing the soft." The well-executed counterfeits of Ashley, Thompson & Co., would hardly be detected while amorous store-keepers were gazing on the charms of their fair customer. Thousands and thousands of dollars in spurious "lush" thus found its way into the business world, and no one thought of looking to a nice young lady as the regular passer thereof.

Well, it was through Kate that Bristol Bill became aware of that vast association of thieves and counterfeiters, the dispersing of which, within a year past, has caused so much excitement. Bill, without committing himself too much to their clutches, was not particularly averse to making the acquaintance of such men as Ashley and his gang, or of Drury, who was said to be the great "fence" of crossmen in general. At a later day, Bill was somewhat identified with William H., alias One-Eyed Thompson, and was in the sequel made the victim of that rascal's treachery.

Bill, however, resting entirely on his own profession, declined having anything to do with the counterfeiting operations, but suffered Catherine to continue in the employ of Ashley as before. He then suggested to A., that the acquaintance of Mr. Drury might be beneficial to him in the way of "smashing" his booty, and

arrangements were accordingly made for an interview

Bill had on hand the plunder of the lace store, a valuable booty, and he wished to exchange it for good "soft" or "blunt."

Among other *confreres* at this time, Bill suddenly came across Jim Downer, alias Cupid, a pickpocket of no little note, who had also escaped from Botany Bay. Cupid was a "square" man, and he and Bill shortly afterwards were connected with one of the most astounding robberies ever committed in New York.

Thus opened the criminal and social career of Bristol Bill in New York—pregnant with some of the most thrilling scenes of adventurous rascality ever disclosed to a startled public.

CHAPTER XIII.

INTRODUCTION TO SAMUEL DRURY—A NEW DEVELOPMENT—A NEW GANG FORMED—THE POUGHKEEPSIE BARGE ROBBERY.

The day arrived when Bristol Bill was to be introduced to Mr. Samuel Drury, an apparently very respectable gentleman, who resided in a fine mansion at Astoria, Long Island. Mr Ashley conducted the ceremony of introduction with considerable grace, and Bill no doubt appreciated it. The renowned cracksman found himself in the presence of a man who appeared to be a little over forty years of age—his hair dark and grizzly—a sharp but restless eye—and with but one arm. There was nothing, however, in his exterior, that would lead a person to suppose he was ought else than an ordinary business man, well to do in the world, and perhaps wealthy. He received Bill cordially, and began immediately to talk to him in the slang manner usual to the "cross." He said that of course Ashley had informed him of the nature of the business that was carried on between

various parties, and it was not unlikely that he (Drury) and Bill might work together to advantage.

Bill signified assent. But there was something about the man that operated strangely on his mind—and he was more engrossed in studying the features of his patron than he was in listening to his proposals. Could it be that Bristol Bill had seen this Drury before in other scenes and in years long past? At last, he abruptly asked the question—

"Drury, are you an Englishman?"

The man seemed surprised—hesitated a moment, and then replied—"Yes, but I have been in this country for quite a number of years."

"Were you a Bow-street officer, ten or twelve years ago?" was the next earnest question of the burglar.

"Yes!" exclaimed Drury, as he started to his feet, not knowing what to make of the mysterious questioning of his visitor.

"I knew it!" said Bill, and his eyes flashed fire. "I knew it! and, by G—d, you are the hound that tracked me to Liverpool, and had me pinched for fourteen years!"

A sudden gleam of memory seemed to startle the one-armed man, but he soon recovered his self-possession. Advancing towards Bill, he held out his hand, and said—"I recollect you now, *Captain Bill*—but you see things have changed since then. If you have any old grudge against me, you must forget it. I was obliged to leave the old country myself—because I halved swag with a crossman!"

Bill moodily took the proffered hand of Drury, and remained silent; but gradually grew interested, and finally good-natured, as his patron proceeded to relate his own career—so full of rascality, so much conniving with thieves, and everything that compromised his honesty as a policeman. With all his ill-gotten wealth he had escaped the clutches of his fellow officers, and come to

America. He now owned a Bank of his own, and he could "pass the soft" through it, and get the "right" money: and he could "smash" all the plunder that cross-men could bring him. Such was the substance of Drury's remarks.

Bill promised to see him again, and departed for the city.

It was now early in the spring of 1845, and Bill was on the watch for a chance to make a "crack." Falling in with Cupid, (Downer, alias Miller,) the pickpocket told him that if he wanted any staunch men, he knew where to find them; and pretty soon, in consequence of this information, Bill made the acquaintance of one William Parkinson, an elderly man, perhaps fifty or fifty-five years old. Parkinson intimated that he knew where there was a great chance for plunder, but it would take more than his skill to get it. At the first interview he did not express himself more fully.

Calling on Parkinson a second time, Bill found him in earnest conference with Cupid, and two men whom he did not at the time know, but who afterwards proved to be the notorious James Honeyman and Dick Collard. As Bill entered the room, Cupid exclaimed—

"There's the man that can plan the whole thing—he can't be beat!"

It was at this time that Bill first heard the idea broached of robbing the barge Clinton, plying between Poughkeepsie and the city of New York, and which was known to convey daily to and fro large sums of money. The four originators of the idea of robbery had the will and courage to perform it, but none of them had the experience and skill to originate a wise plan for carrying out their enterprise. It was in this emergency that the talents of Bristol Bill were called to bear on the case. Listening attentively to a description of the barge, and the place where the money was supposed to be deposited, Bill finally told the rest to keep aloof for a few days, while

he made an examination of the matter; and promised, if he could devise a plan for success, they should immediately be made acquainted with it, and all should participate in the danger and the spoils. Saying this, he departed on his enterprise.

The barge Clinton, Captain Wiltsie, laid at the foot of Murray street, which was her regular place of coming in. Bill proceeded to the spot, and found that the barge had not yet commenced her trips for the season, but would in a few days. During the first part of March, in the day time, there was considerable bustle on board, in consequence of making repairs and the preparations necessary to the commencement of the spring business. Bill therefore had several opportunities to go aboard unnoticed, and on one of these occasions, towards dusk, he took the key from the door of the office, and with a piece of putty or wax obtained an impression of the same. In a few days, the boat commenced running, and Bill made a trip up to Poughkeepsie and back—carefully scrutinizing the position of things, and satisfying himself that the daily transmission of money was quite large.

Returning to his confederates, he quietly informed them that, with a little caution and care on the part of all, a good "crack" might in a short time be made. Directing Parkinson and Honeyman to take occasional alternate trips on the barge Bill set himself to work on a key to the captain's office. By watching attentively, he had discovered that packages of money sent by the boat, from and to different Banks, were deposited in an iron chest or safe, in the office, and that the key to the chest was kept in the money-drawer of the captain's desk. He knew well that to attempt the plunder, one must undergo great risk of detection—but he trusted to the vigilant watch and co-operation of his pals, when the right moment should come. With his wax impresssion, he made a key

But it proved a little imperfect—the reason of which may be guessed from the hurry in which the impression was taken. And, if we recollect aright, on the future trial of Honeyman, the captain of the barge testified that one morning, early in the spring, on taking his key from the door, he “found some red putty or sealing wax adhering to it”—he rubbed it off, and thought nothing more of it until after the robbery. It was necessary, therefore, that Bill should obtain a more perfect pattern. There was a cabin for lady passengers on board, and Bill therefore despatched a woman (whom we need not name) on a trip to Poughkeepsie—providing her with his half-finished key, covered with the same substance as that he had used in his operation on the Broadway lace store. The woman’s mission proved successful, and in a few days Bristol Bill announced to his comrades that he had made a key which would open the captain’s office of the barge Clinton. They now waited for a convenient opportunity.

The captain of the barge was agent for the Poughkeepsie Bank, and the Farmer’s and Manufacturers’ Bank, and had for some years been engaged in carrying exchanges between those institutions and Banks in the city of New York.

While one member of the robber gang would be watching in the vicinity of the boat, others would be in different quarters; while Bill took upon himself the duty of following the captain as he went about the city on business. On the afternoon of the 7th of April, 1845, Bill saw the captain enter the Phoenix Bank, and, on pretence of exchanging a small parcel of money, entered also. While there, apparently unconcerned about anything but his own business, he saw the cashier give the captain six packages of bank bills, enveloped and sealed, to be conveyed to the cashier of one of the Poughkeepsie Banks. The captain tied them up in his pocket handkerchief, and left. Bill, fearful of following too

soon, lingered in the Bank a few minutes, and then stepped carelessly out. But the captain was out of sight, and he therefore hastened to the vicinity of the barge. It afterwards appeared that Capt. Wiltsey, on leaving the Phoenix Bank, called at two or three stores, and finally at the Merchants’ Exchange Bank, at which latter place he received two packages of money for the Poughkeepsie Bank. It was about half-past three o’clock when the captain returned to the barge. As may be imagined, sharp eyes watched every movement. He had the packages in his hands as he went on board, and Parkinson almost brushed against him as he entered his office, in which stood the clerk of the boat at his desk. As was naturally supposed, the money was immediately locked up in the iron chest, and the key placed in the money drawer. About this time, there was considerable commotion on board, from taking in freight, of which an unusually large quantity was being received. The barge was to leave the dock in an hour or two and there were some thirty or forty passengers preparing to go in her. Bill walked about, of course unnoticed in the bustle—while at different points on the slip sauntered Cupid, Collard, and Honeyman, ready, if necessary, to “pass along” the booty.

For about three quarters of an hour after the money had been brought on board, the captain and clerk remained in the office. At the expiration of that time, the captain went on shore, leaving the clerk alone. But although the clerk soon left the office alone, locking the door, no opportunity yet offered itself to the robbers to carry out their scheme. Passengers were wandering up and down the deck, and hands were engaged in storing freight nearby—so that they could not be unperceived. In about quarter of an hour the captain again returned, and for some time he and his clerk were busily engaged in the office.

A little before five o'clock, preparations were beginning to be made to haul the barge out of the dock, and the captain left the office, and went to the forward part of the boat. Time began to grow precious, and Bill was on the alert when he saw the clerk also come out of the office, lock the door, and hurry forward to assist in working the barge out of the slip. None of the passengers were near by, and Bill directed Parkinson to stand in a position where he could give the alarm if necessary, while he proceeded to the work. Bill slipped the false key from his coat-sleeve, and in an instant was in the office. The clerk had carelessly left the money-drawer unlocked, and the robber seized the key to the chest, not stopping to notice the large amount of money (\$2000) that was in the drawer. In less time than it takes the author to describe it, Bill opened the chest, and hastily grasped six of the packages contained therein. He then locked the safe, returned the key to the drawer, and left the office, locking the door of that also. The whole transaction scarcely occupied a minute and a half. Parkinson received three of the packages, and the robbers secreted their booty in their bosoms and pockets. The barge had not yet begun to move, and, separating a little, the thieves sauntered among a group of men who were standing on the side of the boat. As the crew began to warp the barge along, there were several who stepped ashore, and among the number Bill and his venerable pal. Standing quietly on the slip, the robbers looked calmly on the scene; and when the barge had got a little distance, they walked coolly and moderately away. Their conduct was such that the other confederates began to believe that no opportunity had occurred for the robbery and that they were still empty-handed.

According to previous arrangement, the partners in the robbery, five in number, took separate paths to the rendezvous,

which was in a room in the third story of a building in the rear of William street, occupied by Parkinson ostensibly as a carver and gilder's shop. Here the parties met, and on counting the spoils, it was found that their booty amounted to the enormous value of thirty-two thousand dollars!

A division was made; and, after cautioning his pals as to their future behavior, and making them reiterate a promise never to peach on him or each other, Bill left the quartette to the enjoyment of their share of the plunder. He then hurried over the ferry to the house of Drury—told him he had "cracked" something, no matter what—and he wanted to "smash" a bunch of the "soft." Drury carefully examined the bills, and then paid over about \$5000, reserving nearly \$2000 as his own percentage. Early the next morning, Drury was on the way post-haste to his Bank at Canandaigua, where a goodly portion of the barge plunder was soon swallowed in the vortex of a heavy financiering business.

The remainder of the gang, it appears, did not have such facilities for disposing of their funds as those which Bill possessed, but began immediately to pass the stolen bills in various quarters for their necessary wants. But it was some time before the police got the slightest clue to any of the gang—although two or three of the robbers were not unnoticed, and their apparently sudden transition from poverty to wealth could not but excite suspicions. Some two or three months, however, elapsed before any of the real perpetrators of the robbery were "pulled." Parkinson acted carelessly in the passing of his money—hired a house in New York, and repaired it at his own expense—indulged in many luxuries which his means had never before allowed him—offered Poughkeepsie bills of a large denomination in payment of ferriage, &c,—and paid all his expenses with the stolen funds. When finally arrested, a large sum was found hidden in various parts

of his house and shop. Honeyman (Parkinson's brother-in-law,) Cupid, and Col-lard, were arrested on much the same evidence as existed against Parkinson.

Within a year from the time the robbery was committed, these four individuals were brought one by one to trial. Able counsel were engaged by the parties—but the fact that the prisoners were well known as old and notorious thieves, and the finding of much of the stolen money in their possession, sealed their fate, and after hard-contested, tedious trials, each received his sentence to the State Prison.

But they were all "staunch" men, and never a word was uttered by one that would criminate another. Bill, therefore, by not connecting himself with them after the robbery, and having so suddenly and thoroughly disposed of his portion of the money, went free—in fact, we do not know that he was even suspected by the New York police. During the trial of his accomplices, Bill in a quiet way made himself as useful to them as circumstances would permit. On one occasion, by getting an important female witness out of the way, the trial was obliged to be postponed. The police were after the woman for some time, but through the management of Bill she was able to elude pursuit. It was suddenly learned, however, that she was in the vicinity of New Haven, and two officers started for that place. But Bristol Bill was not to be caught napping—he was around the courts, and as yet unknown to the police. He watched every movement of the officers, and became aware that they had got a clue to the woman. Bill instantly "put" for New Haven—arrived there before the officers, and took the woman in charge. We do not recollect the particulars of this affair any farther than that Bill barely escaped with her. They were in a train of cars, we believe, going towards New York; and at a station on the road, as the cars stopped for a few minutes, the officers, who were

waiting at the place, entered the forward car, intending to pass through and make a search. Bill spied them through the window; and just at that moment another train, bound north, stopped at the station. So Bill and his lady summarily left the train they were in, and jumped on board the other—and in a few minutes they were rattling off in another direction. They continued on as far as Springfield, where the witness was safely secreted, and Bill quietly returned to New York.

CHAPTER XIV

A PROFESSIONAL TOUR—FORGERY AND BURGLARY—VISIT TO BOSTON—BENNETT AND THOMPSON—THE CURRIER AND TROTT ROBBERY.

When Bill found that nothing further could be done for his accomplices, he started on a tour to the south and west. It is understood that he committed a great number of robberies in various cities, and escaped undetected. At New Orleans, however, the police, from a description of his person, believe Bristol Bill to be a burglar whom they once arrested, and who broke out and escaped from the city prison before trial. It is not altogether improbable.

The only time that Bill ever tried his hand at forgery, he was detected. It happened in one of the far western cities, and after considerable trouble he forged a draft for a large amount—but it was "no go"—it was not in Bill's line of business. But he managed, in some mysterious way, to escape.

Taking a northern circuit, he reached Montreal, and had the daring to attempt a robbery of the Governor General's house. In spite of every obstacle he succeeded, and carried off a large lot of valuable silver plate—plunder which was shortly after bought by Sam. Drury.

He then began to wend his way towards

New York, and concluded to take a survey of Boston on the way. Coming to this city, he stopped for a few days at the Albion, under quite an aristocratic alias. It was at this time that the store of Currier & Trott, jewellers, on the corner of Milk street, took his eye, and, having ascertained that no one slept in the store, he began to study a plan for making a "crack." But he must needs have assistance, and he therefore set out for New York, to hunt up some crossman who could be relied on.

On his return to New York, he drove quite a bargain with Drury, and disposed of a large collection of plunder. About this period, Gen. James Arlington Bennett, of New Utrecht, Long Island, was introduced to his acquaintance—together with the notorious One-Eyed Thompson, who was residing on Bennett's estate; and Bill was given to understand that they were both members of the Ashley counterfeiting gang. One-Eye frequently solicited Bill to go on some predatory excursion, but the burglar always declined—he had vague suspicions that the man was not perfectly "square," and some secret reason for believing he was disposed to play the part of a stool-pigeon.

Bristol Bill kept to himself the idea of his contemplated "crack" in Boston, until he suddenly found an old acquaintance, and most skilful crossman, in the person of E—h J—m. To him he divulged his plan, and was promised the heartiest co-operation. A complete sett of "tools" was procured, and the twain left for Boston.

On their arrival, J—m went to a third-rate hotel at the north part of the city, while Bill, under the sweet name of E—, put up at the Albion. While maturing their plans, J—m fell in with an old pal, named Jack S—, and induced him to join in the "crack," and S—, in turn, procured another confederate, who was unknown to the two principals in the plot. By a week's watching, Bill became perfectly familiar with the ways of entrance to

the building, and with the habits of the proprietors and clerks. In consequence of what he learned, it was determined that the robbery must take place between Saturday night and Monday morning—for no person slept in the building, and it was seldom entered by any one, during Sunday.

On the morning of Monday, February 1st, 1847, the city of Boston—smart citizens, stupid policemen, and all—was thrown into a state of excitement, by the startling announcement that the jewelry store of Currier & Trott and Widdefield & Co, on the corner of Milk and Washington streets, had been broken open since Saturday night, and robbed of a large amount of property, consisting of chains, rings, watches, &c, probably of the value of ten or twelve thousand dollars. Such a robbery—perpetrated as it was in a most conspicuous locality, in the very heart of the city—could not but surprise every one. City Marshal Tukey examined the premises, and said nothing, and did—nothing! the matter was entirely beyond his comprehension. Officer Clapp, the "old Hayes" of Boston, peered through his spectacles, wiped them, looked mysterious, turned on his heel, and went off and arrested a man for getting drunk! The only personal matters the burglars left behind them was a cold chisel, a short iron bar, and the fragments of bread and cold meat on which they had feasted during Sunday.

The police were so vigilant, in a few days, as to arrest, William Morton, William Brown and George Bell, and the trio were examined on the charge of robbery, and committed for trial. They were all, however, acquitted by a jury, on the 25th of April. In the opinion of the author hereof, two were innocent, while the third was merely an outside accomplice, entirely unacquainted with the two principals in the robbery, Bristol Bill and E—h J—m. One John Smith—an extraordinary name

was also arrested, but no evidence could be brought against him, and he was set at liberty. Not the slightest clue could be obtained to the stolen property, although the chief of police pretended to hunt for it with untiring zeal for several months.

The *modus operandi* of this singular robbery was supposed and described to be, by the Boston press, as follows. It was believed that the thieves obtained access to the interior of the building, through a cellar window, before the store was closed on Saturday evening, and that they remained secreted in the cellar during the early part of the night—having from that time until Monday morning ample time for their operations. When the store was opened on Monday, a large iron safe, in which it was usual to store the most valuable goods, was found to have been forced, and nearly all the contents stolen. A few articles were missing from the show-cases, and also a small sum of money. About fifteen hundred dollars' worth of gold-bowed spectacles, belonging to Widdifield & Co, were taken, also upwards of a hundred gold watches belonging to, or in the possession of Currier & Trott—fifty-three of which were the property of customers. Very few articles of silver were taken, and the affair was noticed as being the most systematic robbery that had taken place for years.

The above account is not far from the truth—but the author can, and probably has, shed a little more light on the subject than has ever before been published. Merely one of the robbers entered the cellar door on Saturday evening, and that was E—h J—m. About midnight, he afforded entrance to two others—while the fourth did “guard duty” outside, until the burglary was completed. Bristol Bill, E—h J—m, and Jack S—, have the honor of being the skilful robbers of Currier & Trotts store—how successful, every one knows. Mr. George Wilkes, editor of the N. Y. Police Gazette, on the occasion of the ar-

rest of Bell, Morton, and Brown, shrewdly observed, in his journal, that the Boston Police were on the wrong trail, and truly remarked, that Boston must be indebted to New York for the author of such a robbery. Mr. Wilkes was right, but we doubt if at that time he had any definite suspicions of such a personage as Bristol Bill—very likely, he had of E—h J—m. Had Mr. Wilkes been employed to ferret out the criminals, we doubt not that at least a portion of them would have been brought to justice. But it would have required a most superior intelligence, and a master mind, to have convicted such a man as Bristol Bill of anything. He could turn his accomplices into mere tools, and use them for any purpose as easily as he could his “jimmies” and “jacks”—all the time keeping himself careful and safe, and disrobing himself of everything that could excite suspicion from the police. Wilkes knew that no burglar robbed Currier & Trott's; he saw the resemblance between that and several burglaries in New York, and it was evident that English experience and London ingenuity had been brought to bear in this instance.

Bristol Bill paid in cash to Jack S— and his unknown comrade, a satisfactory sum for the relinquishment of their shares in the plunder. Bill then furnished E—h J—m with a sum of ready money necessary for his immediate expenses, and sent him to New York—himself taking possession of the entire plunder and storing a part of it in his trunks at the Albion. The robbers had left the store about ten o'clock on Sunday evening. Bill hid a portion of the booty under one end of South Boston bridge (the one leading from Sea street,) where it remained for a considerable time. In a few days, with that portion hid in his trunks, he departed for Providence, and there disposed of it to his “fence,” a jeweller, at an *immense sacrifice*! Returning to Boston, about a month afterwards, he

took the remainder of the booty from under the bridge, and departed for New York. This last portion of the spoils passed into the hands of Sam Drury, and no trace of it was afterwards found—although it is the author's opinion that some of the watches seized by the New York police, at the house of Drury, some months ago, were once the property of Currier & Trott.

Bristol Bill faithfully paid over to E—h J—m a fair share of the proceeds, and the twain for a time separated.

Thus ended one of the most cunning and skilfully-executed robberies that was ever committed in the United States—defying alike the inquisitiveness of the public and the shrewdness and experience of the police.

The author is aware that he is the first one to announce, in print, the fact of Bristol Bill's connexion with this transaction; but the truth has been derived from undoubted and corroborative sources, and leave in the writer's mind no skepticism on the subject. Let one who knows the character, the habits, and peculiar traits of Bristol Bill, study the history of the Currier & Trott robbery—recollecting at the same time the skill and daring evinced in the Poughkeepsie barge affair—and they will not attempt to gainsay anything we have stated. Let them think of Bill's invariable custom of pushing his inferior accomplices into the most apparently conspicuous position, himself, the great leader, keeping just so far in the back-ground as to defy detection.

CHAPTER XV.

BRISTOL BILL AGAIN IN NEW YORK—
MARGARET O'CONNOR—ARREST—BECOMES
A 'SPOTTED MAN'—INDICTED, AND
GETS CLEAR.

We next find Mr. William Darlington, alias Bristol Bill, in the summer of 1848,

in the city of New York. "Flush with the lush," he lived like a prince, and was considered quite a sporting gentleman. He attended the races on Long Island, and bet high—dined at Delmonico's, and took his evening oysters at Florence's. All went "merry as a marriage bell," especially after his happy acquaintance with one Miss Margaret O'Connor—a very pretty and fascinating lady, who was much in need of a protector.

This Margaret O'Connor was a feminine of great personal attractions, and about twenty-three years of age. She was of Scotch descent, and sister to Dick K——n, who was not long since arrested at South Boston, on charge of being concerned in a certain robbery, but for want of evidence discharged. There is no little of romance connected with the early life of this female. She had received a good education, and possessed great musical talent and taste. The first situation in which we definitely find her, was that of a prominent singer in a well-known operatic troupe, and her success in this vocation, though young in years, was remarkable. Her melodious voice enchanted all hearers, and she even rivalled the fair and brilliant leading songstress of the troupe who afterwards sang her "dream of marble halls" with such exquisite effect. But Margaret's history was nought but the common tale of ruin and desertion—cold-hearted treachery had poisoned her vitals, and steeled her heart—and down, down she sank into the vilest holes of a crowded city, the companion of thieves and murderers, and rejoicing in the flash appellation of "Gookin Peg." Like Catherine Davenport, she also had been employed in passing spurious money manufactured by those delectable individuals, Ashley, Bennet, Drury, and One Eyed Thompson, the very distinguished scholar and chemist. She knew the ropes of a crossman's life and was calculated to make a flattering partner for Bristol Bill. In truth her practi

cal genius might vie with that of the most expert screwman in the country—she could fit a lock and file a key almost as well as Bill himself. She was a staunch woman and the burglar took her under his protection; and the author would here mention, that no woman ever exhibited more faithfulness, affection and devotion for a man, than Margaret O'Connor has evinced towards Bristol Bill to the present hour.

One public day, in New York, when quite a crowd was gathered on Broadway, to witness some passing pageant, a gentleman from Cincinnati suddenly found his pocket picked, and raised a great hue and cry. The policemen immediately began to search the crowd, and one of them stumbled on Bristol Bill, who was standing near by, but perfectly innocent of the theft. The officer, without knowing who he was, any other than that he was a conspicuous and "spotted" man, immediately took Bill into custody, and conveyed him to the Tombs. The next morning, on a brief examination of the case, of course no evidence was found against Bill, and he was discharged. As he was passing out of the main door into Centre street, he heard a person (who afterwards proved to be a stool-pigeon) say to an officer, "*That's Bristol Bill!*" and before the burglar had any time to escape, he was again seized, and carried before a Justice. A complaint was hashed-up against him, and he was thrown into prison, where he laid for a long time. After a while, three indictments were found against him—one for burglary, one for obtaining goods under false pretences, and another for perjury concerning some previous matter of bail. On these charges—which to say the least, were very indefinite if not fictitious—Bristol Bill laid in prison for nine months. He employed as counsel James T. Brady, Esq., and Thomas Warner—the former a most able and faithful advocate, and the latter a man of now inevitable notoriety. Finally, when the in-

dictments were returned, in the early part of 1849, after a good deal of exertion on the part of Mr. Brady, the case was arrived at; and, counsel pleading successfully the statute of limitations, (in reference to the date of the offences charged,) Bill was set at liberty. This action cost him the sum of \$3,800, and reduced his finances not a little.

Previous to his being thrown into prison, Bill manifested his love for the fair sex, by keeping three mistresses—one in New York, one in Brooklyn, and the other in Jersey City. On his release, however, he resumed the protection of but one of the trio—Margaret O'Connor.

Shortly after this, finding business dull, and in the full love of adventure, Bill contemplated joining the Cuban expedition. At this time there was a band of Spanish officers in New York, seeking the means and men for revolutionizing the Gem of the Antilles. They held secret meetings, and quite a large number of men were induced to join in the enterprise. Bill, in common with the public, knew that such an expedition was on foot, and he soon found out the place of rendezvous. Ignorant of who their man was, but selecting him from the crowd, the officers unfolded to him their plans, and offered him a company commission—picturing in glowing terms the reward of the enterprise, and hinting at the strong boxes of old Castilians, and the beauty of the Cuban women. Bill went into the preliminary arrangements heart and soul, and even induced some half a dozen of his old pals to join him. Matters were going on swimmingly, it was said, in all the cities, and the expedition would be ready for a descent, from some southern port, in the course of a month or two. But, suddenly, Bill became irritated at the conduct of some of the foreigners who were conducting the affair, accused them of cowardice and duplicity, and left the field in disgust. The expedition afterwards was

broken up, and many a dream of "booty and beauty" was nipped in the bud

CHAPTER XVI.

MARGARET O'CONNOR AND BRISTOL BILL IN BOSTON—MARGARET ARRESTED—DRURY REFUSES BAIL—BILL ARRESTED AND "SHOWN UP," ETC

During the month of July, 1849, the Boston police were informed by officers in New York, that a celebrated English burglar named William Darlington, alias Bristol Bill, had left Gotham for the modern Athens, probably on business connected with his profession. An imperfect description of Bill's person accompanied this information, and certain members of the police department were directed by Marshal Tukey to look after the "distinguished arrival."

About the latter part of the month, Mr. Tukey was informed that a vast number of bills on the Eagle Bank, of Bristol, R. I., altered from 1's to 10's, were in circulation, and it was evident that there was a systematic attempt to make the store-keepers of the city the victims of this spurious money. These altered bills were so neatly executed, that many of them even found their way into the Suffolk Bank. Considerable alarm was felt in certain business quarters, with regard to these last extensive counterfeits. The Marshal immediately caused to be circulated printed notices—"Beware of altered bills on the Eagle Bank, of Bristol, R. I.," &c, and at the same time set the police on a strict watch.

On the afternoon of Monday, July 30th, a very pretty and well-dressed female, answering to the name of Margaret O'Connor, was brought into the Police Court, charged with having passed several counterfeit bills of the description before mentioned. She was readily identified as a

person who had recently passed similar bills at various dry goods stores in Hanover street. Her career had been stopped by attempting to put one upon a Mr. Atkins, a trader on Washington street; but it unfortunately happened for the young lady, that, at the moment she offered the bill, Mr. A. was reading the notice of "Beware," which had just been thrown into the store. His suspicions were excited, and he thought it advisable to have the lady taken into custody. It was supposed that this woman had always accomplices attending her. By making a small purchase, and offering an altered \$10 bill, she would receive at least \$9 in good money—a few steps from the store, she would be met by a man who would take, unperceived, the good money, and give her another of the altered bills—and in this way it is probable that quite a flourishing business had been carried on for some time.

Miss Margaret O'Connor admitted that she hailed from New York, but her lips were closed to all questions respecting herself and supposed accomplices. It was said that she at one time gave the name of Ann Nuger. Evidence was too strong against her on the examination, and she was held for trial in the Municipal Court at the August term, and her bail fixed at \$2000.

About this time, it was apparent that the woman had active friends working in her behalf, and it became a matter of interest to the police to discover who these persons were. A very gentlemanly, well-dressed man had called on an able lawyer, and retained him as counsel in the case—and arduous but unsuccessful attempts were made to have the amount of bail reduced.

On the 11th of August, a bill against Margaret O'Connor was returned by the Grand Jury to the Municipal Court, and, on being arraigned at the bar, the prisoner, in sweet tones and with charming *naivete*, pleaded not guilty. Her trial commenced

on Friday, August 17th, and at the dismissal of the Court quite an interesting little incident occurred. The officer who had the lady in charge was making his way from the court-house, followed by Margaret, to a carriage, in which to convey the prisoner back to jail. The officer, suddenly turning round to look after his fair charge, discovered her quietly walking off, at not a slow gait, in company with a stranger. She was immediately retaken, and placed gently in the carriage. The stranger walked away, but was recognized as an individual, (remarkable for his fine head of black hair and his luxuriant whiskers,) who had been in the court-room nearly all day. This gentleman was Bristol Bill, somewhat disguised.

It is well known that the counterfeit money was the manufacture of Drury & Co. It so happened, that at the time of Margaret O'Connor's arrest, Samuel Drury was in Boston, and of course, (as was the custom of the gang on such occasions,) Bill applied to him for money to bail Margaret. The burglar had some funds of his own, but not enough to make up the required amount—and he had a right to expect assistance from Drury. But the miserly old wretch from Long Island considered that the Eagle Bank game was up, and if any of the gang were now in trouble he had better let them stay there. He refused to give one cent—turned a deaf ear to Bill's entreaties, and departed for New York. Not many months elapsed, ere Drury was in prison and the whole stupendous temple of villany exploded. The public owe much to the shrewdness and ingenuity of Mr. George Wilkes, of New York, in investigating this matter.

Well, Bristol Bill worked like a dog to obtain the money by which he might release Margaret. He made a trip to New York, but could find few of his old confederates who were willing, or if willing were able, to assist him. He returned to Boston

with the most complete sett of burglar's tools that was ever captured by the police; he had no other resort, and he meant to make a bold "crack." But before his preparations were concluded, he met with an obstacle to his movements, in the shape of an arrest of himself, and the capture of his superb cabinet of instruments.

The Boston officers, although long since warned of the proximity of Wm. Darlington, did not yet know their man. Yet Bill was tracked to and fro, as a suspicious character, on account of his apparent connexion with Margaret O'Connor. The first definite information which the police received, came from a notorious thief, named Jack H——s, who one day, in the court-house, pointed out Darlington to an officer, saying—"That's Bristol Bill!" and added enough to lead to Bill's whereabouts.

Certain members of the police, if left to themselves, would have done the business most uniquely, but, obliged to act under the directions of a stupid chief, the whole matter was hastened, and the fruit was plucked before it was ripe. The genteel stranger who so adroitly and coolly attempted the escape of Miss O'Connor, was, after a good deal of "doubling" tracked to a most respectable looking house, at No. 2, Essex Place. It was suspected, by a little watching, that this was the rendezvous of criminals of a various degree. The sapient Marshal soon caused to be issued from the Municipal Court a warrant for the arrest of James Edgerton and wife, on the charge of keeping a house of ill-fame at No. 2 Essex Place. The execution of this warrant brought some astonishing facts to light, but in reality effected little for the cause of public justice.

Early on Sunday morning August 19th, the house of Edgerton was visited by a trio of the police, bent on an important expedition of discovery. Edgerton and his lady were found in the position that must naturally be expected from man and wife, and the office

proceeded to further search the house. On entering one of the rooms, the "strange gentleman," Mr. Bristol Bill, was found alone in bed, and politely requested to rise and don his wardrobe. While this operation was going on, an officer had found four gold watches in a bureau drawer, in the room of the Edgertons, and the remaining two were busily occupied in examining the contents of a small trunk in Bill's room. The undaunted burglar looked coolly on, and in reply to an inquiry, carelessly remarked—"Oh, those are merely my tools!" There was a splendid instrument which would cut a hole through an iron door in very few minutes—there were the English "jim-mies," bits, and augurs, chisels, pincers, saws, a loaded pistol, and skeleton keys without number. Bill and the Edgertons were taken into custody, and the collection of curiosities was transported to the City Marshal's office. It was soon ascertained that Margaret O'Connor, from her previous habits and connexions, was the only proper person necessary to make a perfect quartette—and some rights and privileges which Mr. Tukey assumed in the matter were, to say the least, rather equivocal, if not illegal and unjustifiable. Margaret O'Connor was on trial at the time, and her case had not yet gone to the jury. Yet the City Marshall took upon himself the responsibility of carrying her from the court-house to his office, and with the three others, of "showing up" the woman as one of a gang of thieves and counterfeiters.

During Saturday, quite a large crowd assembled to see the lions of the day. The City Marshal gave a luminous notice of Bristol Bill, mentioned his reputation as a burglar, and exhibited to a wondering public the trophies of the arrest. Bill stood perfectly at ease, smiling amiably at the City Marshal's remarks, and looking carelessly at the crowd before him. The four prisoners were then conveyed to jail. But on Monday, Bristol Bill was set at liberty,

in consequence of the police being unable to maintain any charge against him. The Marshal, however, held on to Bill's professional equipments, which the burglar at first did not seem to relish, but finally remarked—"Well, I can get another sett any time!"

CHAPTER XVII.

BILL'S ATTEMPT TO RESCUE MARGARET O'CONNOR FROM LEVERETT STREET JAIL—THE EDGERTONS—STEPHEN W. FOSTER GOES BAIL—INTERESTING INTERVIEW BETWEEN FOSTER AND BRISTOL BILL—THE BURGLAR "CUTS A SWATH" IN BOSTON.

Before Margaret O'Connor was brought to trial, Bristol Bill, with his characteristic daring and ingenuity, had conceived a notion of rescuing her from the prison—and, it must be confessed, he was not far from succeeding in his object. We have known of criminals endeavoring to break out of Leverett street jail, but this is the only instance within our memory of a burglar attempting to force his way in.

He studied well the locality of the building and the cell in which Margaret O'Connor was confined. One dark night, with a rope ladder, he made his way over the wall, (on Leverett street,) and, avoiding carefully the watchman, proceeded to the outer door of the further jail building. With his wax implements he obtained an impression of the lock, and then cautiously departed. In a short time he finished a key which would unlock the outer door, and, incredible as it may seem, on different nights he actually entered the jail—made a key to the inner door, and had obtained an impression from which he was to make a key to Margaret's cell door, when he was detected, and the whole plan frustrated.

It was the night before Margaret O'Connor's trial came on, and Bill went to the

jail to fit his last key. Everything looked successful, and he expected by the ensuing night to ease his devoted mistress from "durance vile." He made his way inside, proceeded to Margaret's cell, made such an examination of the lock as was necessary and silently left the building. Creeping cautiously through the yard, he reached the wall, where hung his rope ladder. Just then he heard footsteps, and knew that the watchman was near by, going his rounds. Bill had barely time to secret himself, and the watchman almost brushed his person as he passed. Waiting a sufficient time, Bill then scaled the wall, and jumped upon the sidewalk—but, as luck would have it, almost into the arms of a guardian of the night. The watchman was considerably startled, but attempted to seize his prey. Bill made off like a race-horse, and escaped. A day or two after that, he was arrested, shown up, and discharged, while means were taken to keep Margaret more secure.

Bristol Bill after his discharge from custody, became the lion of the town. With a perfectly cool and gentlemanly bearing, and with the reputation of being the most expert and successful cracksman in the country, he elicited a sort of admiration from nearly every one. He visited places of amusement like a sober citizen, and on the Sabbath attended church. Some of the police seemed to take quite a fancy for him, and he was often in their company, as they went about the city on duty. Bill freely admitted that he was a burglar—but wished it to be distinctly understood that he never engaged himself in any "small business"—that when he made a "crack," it was a bold and a big one, and he never left anything behind for a police officer to catch him by. He even jokingly remarked that he might give a specimen of his skill before long. But with all their "pumping," Bill was too dexterous to ever give the officers any tangible fact which could cause his arrest on any particular charge.

Edgerton and his wife had been examined on two charges—that of keeping a house of ill-fame, and of being receivers of stolen goods—and were held for trial in the Municipal Court. They endeavored to get bail, and sent for one Stephen W. Foster, a speculating individual, somewhat suspected of being a "fence," and who, a few years since, acted in the capacity of a stool-pigeon for officer C——. This Foster became bail for the Edgertons, with the understanding that he was to have their furniture, &c., made over to him, as security against loss. Thus matters remained for a day or two, when Foster found himself unable to arrange the papers of transfer, on account of the mysterious absence of Edgerton. He therefore proceeded to the house in Essex Place—entered, either by violence or by means of false keys—and packed up and removed two loads of furniture. He was busily engaged in preparing a third load, when a man suddenly entered the house, seized the astonished Foster by the collar of his coat, and in a stentorian voice demanded—"You infernal scoundrel! what business have you here? what have you done with my furniture?" And the speaker, who was none other than Bristol Bill, gave Mr. Foster an unceremonious "shaking up," without, however, doing him any serious violence. Foster persisted in refusing to tell where he had conveyed the missing furniture. Bristol Bill informed him that the furniture was his property—that it had been mortgaged by Mr. Edgerton to Mr. William Darlington, and for proof of the same would respectfully refer him to the Register's office, where the deed was recorded. Foster was quite confounded, but would give no information, and left the house, the keys of which Bristol Bill put in his own pocket. The burglar threatened to lodge a complaint against Foster for house breaking and larceny—stating that the missing property was legally his, and he should use all pro

per means to recover possession of it. This curious affair created considerable sensation, and one of the principal Boston journals remarked as follows:—"What the final issue of this matter will be, remains to be seen; but the fact of a person very recently 'shown up' as a notorious burglar, having in his possession at the time of his arrest the most perfect and complete sett of burglar's tools ever seen in this city, lodging a complaint against another person (who had bailed his supposed accomplices) for a crime punishable in the State Prison for a term of years, is a circumstance of no ordinary occurrence." We believe that Bill endeavored to procure a warrant for the arrest of Foster, but the Justice to whom the application was made refused to grant it. The Edgertons had vamosed, but were followed and captured by Foster, and some satisfactory arrangement was afterwards made between the parties—though Foster, in the end, found that he had been seriously "bitten."

Margaret O'Connor was found guilty, by the jury, of passing counterfeit money, although one or two jurors for a long while stuck out against such a verdict. One of these was a Mr. Squires who was a particular friend of Foster's, and was afterwards tried and acquitted on a charge of passing bad money; the other juror was a non-resistant and an ultraist of the Garrison school, and didn't like to find a verdict of guilty against anybody. But they both finally yielded to the majority. Margaret would probably have gone to the House of Correction for two or three years, but she remained for some time in jail awaiting sentence, which has never been given—she having been bailed and sent to New York as a witness on the Drury trials.

For a month or two after Margaret's conviction, Bristol Bill was in the city most of the time—apparently taking it easy but really having his head full of business—manouvering, and laying cun-

ning plans for the future. The police felt quite interested and concerned with regard to him—but the supposed robber of Currier & Trott was too much for them, and he walked about as independently as a millionaire.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BURGLAR AT WORK AGAIN—FOSTER SPECULATES IN NEW YORK MONEY—FOSTER "GETS BIT"—HISTORY AND SEQUEL OF THE TRANSACTION—BILL'S TRAVELS.

During the fall of 1849, Bristol Bill was quite busy in "prospecting," or laying plans and preparations for future robberies. It was he who planned the successful breaking open of the Phoenix Bank, at Westerly, R. I. and also of the Dorchester and Milton Bank—both of which robberies were eventually committed by his pals, who used his false keys and tools. Bill himself made an attempt on the Georgetown Bank that fall, which failed, and tried the same game again, early the next spring, which came very near being successful.

It will be recollected that Stephen W. Foster was tried in New York for attempting to pass an altered \$500 bank note to a broker in Wall street, named Colgate, and that on a second trial he was acquitted, there being no proof that Foster knew it was counterfeit. Some curious particulars concerning this affair may not be uninteresting, especially as Foster has repeatedly, in private, charged that Bristol Bill was the individual who "put up the game" by which he was defrauded. One day last fall, (1849,) the attention of Bostonians was attracted to handbills on the corners of the streets, announcing the loss of some \$2500 in New York bills, supposed to have been picked from a gentleman's pocket while on his way from the Worcester De-

to State street. But as no complaint of the kind had been left at the Marshal's office, the police did not see fit to look into the matter. It afterwards turned out (so it is said) that these handbills were only a *guy* gotten up by Bristol Bill and a confederate. In a day or two after the placards were posted, a man went to Foster, intimated that he had a certain amount of New York money that was advertised as stolen or lost, and offered a first-rate bargain if Foster would buy it. The man was a stranger, but the chance to make \$500 was too much for Foster's cupidity to resist; so he went to friends and borrowed the necessary funds, without, however, telling them all he knew of the contemplated speculation. The stranger had appointed the Common as a place of interview, at a certain hour in the afternoon, and the bargain was to be there concluded. Foster took a bank note detector, and with a friend (Squires,) repaired to the spot, where they found the stranger. The New York bills were produced, and Foster and Squires examined them by the Detector, but found nothing to lead them to suspect that the bills were anything but genuine. Foster merely supposed that they were the good money recently advertised as stolen in Boston. So he paid over some first-rate funds, and the parties separated. Foster started for New York with what purported to be a \$500 bill on the Mechanics' and Tradesmen's Bank of that city, offered it to two different brokers, requesting gold in exchange, and suddenly found to his chagrin that the bill was an altered one, and that he had been severely duped. He did not stop to be arrested, but left the bill behind him, and returned to Boston. Afterwards, however, he gave himself up, and requested a trial, pleading ignorance as to the money being bad when he attempted to pass it. Mr. Colgate, at the trial, testified that Foster said he was going to California, and therefore wanted gold, and that he received

the bill of a man named *Shaw*. John C. Park, Esq, of Boston, defended Foster, and after relating his client's own story (a little different from the above) to the jury, a verdict of not guilty was rendered, and Foster was discharged. He then set to work to see what could be done in the way of redress, but he was liable, by probing the matter, to only burn his own fingers worse. He has confidently stated, however, that the stranger who "sold him" was the notorious E—h J—m, and that the whole affair was instigated by Bristol Bill, who was standing on the Common, not far distant when the bargain was made. This, he says, was an after discovery.

One thing is certain, Bristol Bill was in the city about that time. Arrangements were going on for the liberation of Margaret O'Connor on bail, for the purpose of taking her to New York, to testify against Drury and One-Eyed Thompson. Bill, therefore, was frequently travelling between New York and Boston, and was wide awake to any scheme by which he might "raise the lush," and perhaps at the same time gratify a little pique against a man for whose morality and ability he had little veneration. Foster made several attempts to overhaul Bill, but the Vermonters got him first. The worthy Stephen has since departed for California, there to make up his losses experienced from peculiar kinds of speculation.

On one of Bill's frequent visits to New York, during that Fall, the *Police Gazette* facetiously announced the "distinguished arrival" as follows:

"Bill Darlington, alias Bristol Bill, assistant chief of the Boston police, under Marshal Tukey, honored this city with a visit by the Wednesday morning boat. There have been already many surmises as to the object of his visit, some ascribing it to a desire to supply himself with a new kit of burglar's instruments; others to a wish to inspect the construction of the vaults of

the new buildings for the Chemical and Exchange Banks; while the fewest number ascribe it to a desire on his part to embrace Christianity under the ministration of the Rev J. H. Green, of the Brooklyn Centenary Church.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CELEBRATED TORPEDO CASE—ONE EYED THOMPSON AND BRISTOL BILL—DRURY AND SON ARRESTED—THEIR PRIVATE CONFESSIONS—“GAME ALL ROUND.”

Few of the present generation will forget the curiosity awakened and the excitement created by the arrest of Samuel Drury and his son, during the latter part of 1849. The arrest brought to light such a tremendous array of almost incredible facts—exposed such a gigantic scheme of villainy—that the public were astounded. Mr. Wilkes, of the *National Police Gazette*, was the individual who so creditably ferreted out the chiefs in the most extensive gang of criminals ever known in this country.

In May, 1849, a torpedo box was sent to the house of one Thomas Warner, a lawyer in New York city. By its explosion, Mr. Warner and his family were placed in great jeopardy, and barely escaped with their lives. Some months afterwards, Mr. Samuel Drury was arrested on the charge of sending the box, with the intention of killing Mr. Warner, with whom he formerly had business, and subsequently quarrelled with. On searching Drury's house at Astoria, counterfeiting apparatus and an immense amount of jewelry and suspicious goods were discovered—leading to criminal charges additional to those at first contemplated. Mr. Wilkes, in his endeavors to bring Drury to justice, sought the co-operation of One-Eyed Thompson and Bristol Bill. It was necessary to obtain some admissions from both Drury and his son, and traps were laid accordingly.

Thompson first volunteered to commence the business, by luring young Drury to a conference, and obtaining admissions from him unsuspected. On the 17th of September, Thompson persuaded Drury's son to accompany him to the Starr Tavern, where they entered, and sat down in a small private apartment in the rear of the bar-room. Mr. Wilkes and a man named Johnson, according to previous concert, were at the tavern before the other parties, and when Thompson and young Drury arrived and entered the room before mentioned, Johnson, at the direction of Wilkes, took a position outside of the house, at the open window, so that he could both hear and see all that was going on. Thompson commenced the conversation shrewdly, discoursing cunningly and learnedly on the subject of hens and women, game cocks and children, and other topics calculated to interest the young man and disarm suspicion of what he was driving at. When he had got young Drury into proper tune, Thompson suddenly asked him—

“It is rather a delicate subject, Sam, but how does the old man use you?”

Drury replied—“You know what he is; when he is sober I have no trouble with him—but when he drinks and gets excited I suffer a great deal.”

Thompson then said—“About that torpedo box, Sam, do you think everything is safe about that?”

Sam replied—“I think it is.”

Thompson then carelessly remarked that the man who made the box was out of the way, for he had been sent to California. The young scamp remained unsuspecting and Thompson proceeded—

“Sam, how came you to carry the box there?”

Drury immediately answered—“I never should have carried it, if my father had not compelled me!”

Thus Thompson cunningly led the fellow on, until he had obtained from him

whole history of the transaction. Young Drury told how he had disguised himself as a negro, and carried the box under his cloak to Warner's house—how he rang the bell, and when the door opened gave the box to the servant girl, with the direction to "hand it to Massa Warner." The boy naturally supposing that Thompson knew all about the matter, conversed freely, and related every necessary particular. The two had been eating during this time, and the conversation ended, they rose to depart.

Johnson, who had listened to all that was said, that evening noted down the dialogue and afterwards swore to it in Court.

The next step was to entrap the elder Drury to some place, and worm a confession of his villany from his own lips. For this purpose, Bristol Bill's ingenious talents were called into play. A third-story back room, at No. 23 Fulton street, Brooklyn, was procured, which Bill was to apparently occupy. He was to pretend that he was "lying low," and Drury was to be told that he had the money of the late Provincetown robbery. Thompson was to lure Drury to Bill's room, for the purpose of buying the "swag." The arrangements were perfected, and the day came when Drury was to make his appearance at Mr. Darlington's apartment.

Leading out of Bill's room, was a large closet, and in this place were secreted, under the direction of Mr. Wilkes, police officers Jenkins and Crassous, while A. M. C. Smith and others were near by. Bill had his coat off, and was at a table, seemingly engaged in writing. Pretty soon, Thompson and Drury came, and there was a general shaking of hands, and the two last comers took seats.

On sitting down, Drury said to Bill—"So, they have got you close!"

"Yes," said the burglar—"for a few days."

A conversation was then commenced by Thompson, in reference to the Province-

town money which Bill had, and Drury asked Bill if he had the whole command of it.

Bill said—"Yes, I have got it planted."

Drury then remarked—"When I undertake any business of this kind, I always do it up right away—delays are dangerous."

Thompson enquired the denomination of the bills, and Darlington gave a description of them.

Drury said that was well, and that they could be easily disposed of. He then asked Bill when he could get them, and if he could not come up to his house.

Bill replied that he dared not come over there—they might nab him.

Drury, however, agreed to place all danger out of his way, and arrangements were calculated for a future interview.

And now came the point when Thompson and Bristol Bill were to lead old Drury into an admission of one of his crimes, to be listened to by the secreted policemen, and afterwards testified against him.

Thompson led off, by saying—"That G—d d—d Warner, I ain't safe anywhere while he is about, I wish that machine had gone off in the night-time, instead of when it did; or if the place had been closed, it would have blown him to hell! He suspected me of it—but you know (speaking to Drury) that I knew nothing of it. I am going to make one, and I hope I shall be more successful."

Bill then charged Thompson with having sent the torpedo box.

Thompson said—"No, no, I knew nothing of the last—that was Drury's—but I am going to father this; I shall put ten pounds of powder in mine. I don't know how much was in yours—(addressing Drury.)"

Bill interrupted, by asking Drury—"How much was in yours?"

The old villain immediately replied—"Three pounds."

"Well, I shall have ten pounds in mine,

said Thompson—"and that will blow the house from its foundation to the skies. I hope I shall be more successful than you was."

"I hope so," Drury replied—"I have done my best. But how are you to get into the house?"

Thompson said that Bristol Bill was to see to that.

"Yes," said Bill—"leave that to me."

Something was said about the key to the door of the house, when Bill added—"Pshaw! nippers will do that—leave it to me."

"Well," said Drury, "if we three stick together, all hell can't catch us!"

Thus the conversation went on. Bill and Thompson pretended that they were going to California, and were going to do "the job" the night before they went.

This conference lasted some two hours and a half, while the trio sat at their ease, indulging in some cigars and brandy, which Bill brought forth from a closet.

Drury finally departed, and the officers left their hiding-place.

On the evidence here and otherwise obtained, Drury was shortly afterwards arrested, and his situation was made the worse from the fact that when he was taken several of his own altered and counterfeit bills were found upon him.

CHAPTER XX.

ONE EYED THOMPSON ON TRIAL FOR COUNTERFEITING—HIS HISTORY AND PERSONAL APPEARANCE—CATHERINE DAVENPORT MAKES AN EXPOSE—CHRISTIAN MEADOWS INVOLVED—YOUNG DRURY'S EVIDENCE—MARGARET O'CONNOR—THOMPSON'S OWN ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF.

Drury was now bent on revenge, and he brought all his diabolical forces to bear. One-Eyed Thompson was soon arrested on the various charges of making the torpedo box to kill Warner, of forgery, and making

counterfeit money. Here were two most notorious scoundrels a battle with each other and each had a foeman worthy of his steel.

Warner proceeded to Boston and bailed Margaret O'Connor, and she was carried to New York as a government witness.

We shall not pretend to review any one of the trials that have taken place in New York; but as a great many facts were elicited that shed much light on the operations of the gang, including Bristol Bill and two of his mistresses, we shall refer to portions of the evidence as given on the trial of Thompson for forgery.

This William H. Thompson is an American by birth, and was bred a printer. He is a man of good education and peculiar talents, but some disappointment in youth is said to have made the man morose in disposition, and caused him to entertain a general pique against mankind. He has devoted himself much to the study of chemistry, and become quite an expert, in experimenting therein. Among other things he has practised as a doctor, and produced some remarkable medicines. Pressed hard in his pecuniary affairs, in 1840, he became leagued with a band of thieves, and was involved in several charges of burglary; but he escaped, partly through some legal technicality, and partly by reason of some information which he gave to the authorities. He then, for a few years, kept a drug store, but in 1846 was again arrested for burglary in company with one Johnson. The latter was convicted; but Thompson, when brought to trial, defended his own case, and was acquitted. He then joined the Drury and Ashley gang, and his connection with those arch villains will be seen as we proceed.

Thompson was brought to trial at Brooklyn, and charged with having made counterfeit bills on the Eagle Bank, of Bristol R. I., and passed the same to Joseph C. Ashley. The prisoner, as usual, relied on his own ability, and acted as his own

lawyer. Thompson came into court, attended by an officer, and looked calmly upon the gazing multitude, perfectly cool and self-possessed. He is a tall man, of slender but firmly-set figure; his complexion pale; his forehead high and bold; nose straight; mouth well-formed, and containing a good set of teeth; and all that renders his frontispiece imperfect is the loss of one eye. On this occasion, he was neatly dressed in a suit of black, his shirt-collar being turned down *a la Byron*.

Several witnesses were first introduced to show that Ashley had passed several counterfeit bills, and finally Catharine Davenport was called to the stand. She said she was unmarried, but had two children by Bristol Bill. She had lived in Thompson's house, near New Utrecht, and had seen a man named Fields (alias Meadows) there; he had come with Thompson from Boston, and staid three months. There was a room in the house, where Thompson kept his books and bottles—there were a number of bottles with glass stoppers, and a press; and Catharine had seen Fields and Thompson pack the press in a barrel, and send it away. In Thompson's sleeping room the witness had seen bank bills; some were on the floor, and others were pasted on pieces of glass cut to suit the size of the bill. She had also seen Thompson's wife take some of these bills and lay them on the bed to dry. Witness said she had passed three bills in Brooklyn which Thompson had given her to pass away; he told her to be careful, and not to mention any name if anything happened, and he would send a lawyer to her. She passed the bills in butchers' stalls, and gave the change to Thompson; he told her the bills were good, but a little alteration had been made in them.

At this point, Thompson wanted to introduce an affidavit made by Catharine Davenport some time before, and was allowed to read it. The substance of the document

was in direct contradiction to the evidence just given. But Catharine went on to testify that Thompson had read it to her, and told her it was to serve Bristol Bill; that he did not want her as a witness, and the affidavit should only be used to serve Bill. She was asked if she had sworn to it, and replied that she supposed she had: she held up her hand, but did not at the time think there was any harm in it.

Catharine then proceeded to testify that besides the bills before mentioned, she had passed ten of the same kind that Ashley was charged with passing; that Thompson had said four of them were well done and six badly done—the former she had to pass in the daytime, and the others at night, at the market and at dry goods stores. The contents of Thompson's bottles were of different colors; she had seen him dip a bill into a bottle, and then hang it up to dry. The witness, during her cross-examination, said she had known Bristol Bill for six or seven years; and that she had heard he had been arrested through Thompson's instrumentality. In answer to a question, she replied that Bristol Bill had never given her any counterfeit money—Margaret O'Connor had given her \$20 in good money, but never any bad.

Young Sam Drury, on being called as a witness, said he was at Thompson's house during the month of July, 1849. One day, while at dinner, a tall man (probably Meadows) came and called Thompson out. When T. returned, he asked Sam to make a journey for him—he wanted him to go to Bristol, R. I., and get \$500 in one-dollar notes, which were wanted by the tall man, who was an iron manufacturer at Pottsville. Sam went, but got only \$415, all the small money the Bank had. Thompson next wanted him to go a certain store, and get a small bag for him in the name of Carr—and Sam did so. When the bag was opened, Thompson took out two small cop-

per plates, with a "5" and a "10" on them.

The witnesses that had been called to appear against Thompson presented a most formidable array. There were the Drurys, Arlington Bennett and his daughter, Ashley and his family, Bristol Bill's two women, police officers, servant girls, engravers, cartmen, lawyers, &c.

Ashley testified that Thompson had paid him a debt in the bad money which he afterwards passed—making himself out an innocent, injured individual, and Thompson all that was guilty.

Bennett swore that he used to visit Thompson's house frequently, and there saw a man named Fields, or Meadows, an engraver, the same one who was recently arrested with Bristol Bill in Vermont. Thompson once showed him a \$50 bill on the Tradesmen's Bank, and told him that it was altered from a \$1, and was part of a large batch got up for Mississippi. Thompson had also shown him \$10 bills on the Eagle Bank of Bristol, which he had altered from 1's.

After a while, Miss Margaret O'Connor was called, and great curiosity was manifested on the part of the spectators to see the distinguished consort of Bristol Bill. She stepped boldly forward, and looked calmly at those before her. She was dressed in black, with a crimson velvet bonnet, black silk visite, kid gloves, and parasol. Her whole appearance was lady-like in the extreme, and she gave her testimony with peculiar firmness and nonchalance, as if quite at her ease.

Margaret said she knew Mr. William H. Thompson; she once lived in his house, in Division street, New York. The upper part of the house, and a garret, were kept free from visitors; but she was once in there with Thompson, and she saw a small press standing on a table, also some bank bills pasted on glass. She furthermore saw various liquors in bottles, of

which Thompson told her the use. He said he had them for extracting the ink from bills, and showed her how he had done it on a \$10 bill; he showed her one that was not altered, as well as one that was. Margaret saw a small stove red hot there, and Thompson said he kept it for the purpose of consuming anything, in case the officers should come upon him. The witness stated that in February, 1849, she received a \$10 bill from Thompson, and with it bought a plain gold ring. She knew the bill was an altered one, because she got it from Thompson as a recompense for making the signature to some bills that were not signed. He told Margaret that she wrote a good hand, and she signed several bills on a bank in Pontiac, Michigan. The bill she received herself was signed by Thompson. Margaret proceeded to testify that Thompson had a man, named Meadows, employed to alter and counterfeit bank bills, at the house where she had boarded; she had heard conversations between Thompson and Meadows concerning the business. She admitted that she had been arrested in Boston for passing counterfeit bills on the Eagle Bank of Bristol, and when asked by Thompson who sent them to her, she abruptly replied—"You and Drury did."

Margaret O'Connor also stated that she signed a certain affidavit in Boston, in presence of Marshal Tukey, in order that she might be sent for to New York by Warner and Thompson. When asked by Thompson if she knew Bristol Bill, she answered, "Unfortunately I do." But here the young lady was "playing 'possum," for it was well understood that she was as devoted as ever to Bill, and that he had encouraged her to "blow" on Thompson and Drury.

When the evidence for the prosecution was all in, Thompson rose to address the jury, and labored hard, in what we must confess was an able speech, to convince them that he was a very innocent and much

persecuted individual. He said this was the first time he had ever been the orator in Court, but he hoped the jury for that reason would grant him every allowance. He then went on to criticise the evidence in a most masterly manner, and suddenly broke out with the following, which certainly was a point, and made a "good hit:"

"The District Attorney (said Thompson) has distinctly charged that I was the head and front of a dangerous band of men who infested this country; but what evidence has been brought to sustain this assertion? There is Drury, the wealthy banker, the owner of \$80,000 worth of property—the honest, ay, the very honest possessor of coining dies, and of costly jewelry which once he swore had been lost in the fire! Here is honest Ashley, though convicted of perjury and forgery;—and here, finally, is honest James Arlington Bennett, the planner of murder, and one of the most expert of forgers! All these great persons have lived in the greatest style—have had friends and supporters—yet I, poor as I am, unable even to get the common necessities of life, without a friend, and in the greatest need, am charged with being the leader of these men!"

Thompson then went back to an early period of his life, relating a variety of incidents, which in some cases drew forth a smile from court and jury. He dwelt minutely on some transactions which he had when employed by some of the New York police, and seemed disposed to blow his own trumpet loud and long. He alluded to the great Proctor will forgery, by Joseph C. Ashley, and offered to prove by the Chief of Police and others, that the investigation of that matter had been offered to him, but refused from certain reasons. Still he (Thompson) had his curiosity excited by the mysterious aspect of the case, and he made up his mind to fathom it privately, to satisfy himself. For this reason he encouraged the advances of Ashley to-

wards him, when they both met at the Tombs, and soon the particulars of the mystery were known to him. Having refused to follow the matter, he (Thompson) became suspected by the police; his actions although they were beyond suspicion, were misinterpreted; policemen, who went on the reward system, leagued themselves with the very thieves whom he had once exposed; and paid journalists raised a cry of "stool pigeon," which soon found believers. He became feared and hated; he was hunted down and left by friends, and whilst the villains whom he had in his reach revelled in luxury, he (Thompson) struggled hard for a scanty maintenance, and lived on bread and water. But even here it did not rest. After having, by great exertions, invented and favorably introduced a medicine of superior quality, he was on the eve of selling his share in it for \$2000, when some of his enemies heard of his approaching prosperity. The consequence was, that two days before the money was to be paid, he was arrested on two charges of burglary, and although he was afterwards acquitted by the magistrate who investigated the matter, yet his enemies had blackened his prospects by officiously informing the person who was to buy the share in the medicine of his arrest. It was at that time that he applied to Mr. Havemeyer for a situation; he (Thompson) told the Mayor he was afraid that circumstances would draw him to become a thief, unless he got a situation of some kind. The application was favorably received, but was afterwards refused.

Thompson continued. When in jail on the two charges of burglary, he made the acquaintance of Ashley. This individual introduced him to Bristol Bill, Sam Drury Smith Davis, and others, all notorious characters. Subsequently he was told by officer Stokely that Drury was to be tried at Hempstead for arson, and Stokely thought that Thompson might be employed to serve the ends of justice, he believing that Drury

was a guilty man, but on application to Mr. Taylor, the counsel for the prosecution he was refused, once more, in consequence of his reputation.

Thompson then went on to state the relations existing between him and Drury; how he was paid by the latter to procure two thieves to steal a trunk containing papers from the District Attorney's office, in Hempstead, to destroy the evidence of Drury's guilt in the arson case. He entered upon the torpedo business; he told all the well known particulars, and appealed to the confessions of young Sam in the "mouse trap," and old Sam in the "rat trap," to support him in his assertions. He then dwelt upon the evidence offered by the prosecution in the present case, and commented upon it at some length. Thompson spoke about an hour and a half, and was listened to with great attention.

CHAPTER XXI.

THOMPSON'S TRIAL CONTINUED—THE LION AT BAY—OATHS COUNTED NOTHING—STOOL PIGEONISM SOMEWHERE—BOSTON OFFICERS MIXED UP IN THE SCRAPE—THOMPSON FINALLY ACQUITTED.

Thompson next began to call witnesses for the defence, and attempted to show that he had himself made exertions to discover the passers of the bad money—that he had applied to the police to employ him in such business, &c. The substance of this sort of evidence only tended to show that he was either guilty as charged in the indictment, or a confirmed stool-pigeon. It was very unsatisfactory.

He then commenced impeaching the testimony of Arlington Bennett, by introducing a host of witnesses who swore that they would not believe him on oath—in truth, they gave the ex-Mormon General no very flattering character. There was no little evidence to convince every one

that perjury was the order of the day, and it seemed almost impossible to sift truth from falsehood, so skilfully were they mixed together in the mass of testimony.

A. M. C. Smith, police officer, was sworn. He said that, according to his own information, Ashley had been a dealer in counterfeit money for the last fifteen or sixteen years—that Ashley attempted to go bail for the notorious Smith Davis, his brother-in-law, (and King of the Koney-ackers.) Recently, Ashley wanted the witness to speak to Mr. McKeon, government attorney, about him (Ashley) turning state's evidence against Drury, and getting the reward himself; Ashley also gave Smith to understand that he furnished the matches for the torpedo.

Officer Smith went on to state that he was in Boston in September, 1849. He went there at the request of Mr. Wilkes, to get an affidavit of Margaret O'Connor; he met One-Eyed Thompson at the depot, and they went together to Marshal Tukey. Mr. Wilkes had employed Thompson to act against the Drury. Mr. Smith said he saw Margaret O'Connor in the presence of her lawyer and a justice of the peace. Witness then added—"At Boston, in the presence of Tukey, something was said about Meadows coming to New York; Thompson, Tukey, Clapp and I were talking, but I do not know all that was said." [What stool-pigeon arrangement was being concocted here?]

To show Thompson's hand in the game, and exhibit his treachery to the other members of the gang, let us take a little of the evidence given by Mr Gillespie, a policeman, who stated that he was applied to by Thompson to watch a man named Meadows. He proceeded thus:—"Immediately after the explosion of the torpedo, Thompson applied to me to watch certain parties. It was to watch Meadows on Long Island, for the purpose of procuring the papers stolen from the District Attorney's of

face in New York. Bristol Bill was with Meadows. I followed Bill through Brooklyn to the Atlantic Ferry, which he crossed; it was done at Thompson's request. Wilson, an engraver, was also with Bill and Meadows."

William W. Wilson was then sworn. He said he was an engraver, and resided in Boston. Meadows once worked for him, and in January, 1849, stole a large number of dies and tools from his office, by breaking into it. Thompson had pretended to give him information where he could find his dies. He had afterwards found them in Vermont, where Meadows and Bristol Bill were arrested.

James Gahagen, a man of most forbidding appearance, who now lives in Boston, and was once implicated in some of the depredations of Cupid and Parkinson, was called to the stand. This witness was one of Drury's paid minions, and testified to several things (rather crookedly) calculated to fasten the charge of counterfeiting on Thompson.

James M. Smith, Esq, was employed by Thompson to sum up the evidence, and make the final address to the jury in his behalf. The argument of Mr. S. was an ingenious production, and a portion of its conclusion we quote as follows:—

"We show you Samuel Drury, charged with an attempt at murder—and Thompson is the witness against him; charged, moreover, with forgery, and Thompson is again the witness. We then come to Bristol Bill and Meadows, both criminals of the deepest dye, who also were arrested upon Thompson's information. Next we come to Bennett, charged with forgery; and Ashley, under five indictments for forgery—all brought to justice by Thompson. He was the only man who could and dared to expose them. Look at the combination against him; look at the motive for hordes of perjurers to come up here, and by their testimony try to deprive him of his liber-

ty, that the walls of the State Prison might close upon him, and thus seal his lips forever." * * * * "The temple of justice is not to be thus defiled; we must have no prisons ransacked in search of evidence, and we must have no paramours of burglars to back the testimony of a corrupted witness, to blast the reputation of an innocent man!"

By such language as this, Thompson's advocate undoubtedly threw much doubt on the whole evidence of the Drury gang, and it had ample effect upon the minds of the jury. He concluded by saying:—

"The prosecution is to satisfy you that this bill (handing the indictment, with the counterfeit bill attached, to the jury,) was in the possession of Thompson, and that he altered it, or caused it to be altered. Unless this is clearly shown, you must acquit him, although it might appear that his pockets had been lined with counterfeit money; it is this identical bill you have to determine upon, and by it the prisoner stands or falls."

The jury returned a verdict of not guilty, and were undoubtedly justified in so doing, considering the peculiar circumstances of the case. There could be little doubt that Thompson was all he was charged with being, but the evidence in the case was very unsatisfactory. If guilty, he had shown a most treacherous disposition towards his confederates, and had evidently intended to raise himself up, as he crushed his villanous partners down. Thompson appeared to possess none of that quality styled "honor among thieves"—he looked only to *self*, perfectly indifferent to the world beside, and ready at all times to sacrifice friends and foes as victims to his vain conceit and inordinate cupidity.

That he is a man of genius cannot be denied—but his is a genius of a diabolical nature. He is a man of whom it may be most truly said, "He is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils." Wily, cunning and hypocritical, when occasion demands—

brave, and most desperate when danger threatens—he is a man to be feared. An evil spirit glances from each flash of his eye—a snare hangs on each word that falls from his seductive tongue—his heart is a mysterious, hidden thing, whose pulsations no mortal hand may feel. “Let no such man be trusted!”

Like many others betrayed by the vile wretch, Bristol Bill and Meadows became the victims of Thompson’s stool-pigeon treachery, as will be seen hereafter.

CHAPTER XXII

BRISTOL BILL GOES TO VERMONT — COUNTERFEITING AND BURGLARIES CONTEMPLATED—BILL’S WHEREABOUTS BETRAYED—ARREST OF THE GANG.

During the winter of 1849–50, Bristol Bill, finding the eastern cities rather too not to hold him, proposed to Meadows that they should seek a new field of operations. Margaret O’Connor was at liberty in New York, on bail, and not at all reluctant to decamp. The trio therefore secretly started across the country, and arrived at Groton, a small village in Caledonia county, Vermont, and not far south of the Canada line.

Bristol Bill carried with him a complete equipment of burglarious tools, and Meadows took all the apparatus for counterfeiting, including the dies stolen from Wilson in Boston. English Jim, the accomplished and notorious burglar, afterwards joined the party, and it was the intention of all to make the enterprise a profitable one.

On arriving at Groton, Bill began to cast about him to see whom he could league in with him, for the purpose of assistance, and of blinding the eyes of the community in regard to his real occupation. He succeeded in entrapping into his schemes three men of reputed respectability—McLean

Marshall, a tavern keeper, Ephraim Low a store keeper, and one Peter M. Paul. He excited the cupidity of these men by telling in glowing terms of the fortunes that could be made, and of the little risk of detection. According to his usual line of policy, he made it an object to cause them to so commit themselves in the affair, that they could not easily “back out,” or feel it their interest to betray him.

Bill and Meadows took possession of a small house owned by Ephraim Low, in an obscure part of the town, and began to commence operations. Meadows set about preparing his paper and dies, while Bristol Bill and English Jim occasionally took a cruise into the surrounding country, for the purpose of surveying the locality and fastness of various Banks.

But Thompson, in New York, was beginning to get seriously into trouble, and felt quite disposed to profit by any information which he could give, that would lead to the discomfiture of any who had shown animosity towards him. Learning of the absence of Bill and Meadows, he sought to discover their destination. Succeeding, he informed Wilson, the engraver where he would probably find his stolen dies, and so put him on the track, that Wilson finally reached the vicinity of the gang. Bristol Bill was at the Coosack House, in Wells River, a few miles from Groton, one day, when, when Wilson, who had happened there in his travels, saw and recognised him. Wilson knew that Meadows must be connected with him, and therefore put the authorities on Bill’s trail.

Bristol Bill had been passing current in the neighborhood as a quiet, respectable citizen, under the euphonious name of William H. Warburton. Margaret O’Connor passed as his wife, but was remarked for her rich dresses and jewelry with which Bill’s vanity had decked her. Meadows kept quietly in the house, industriously at

work. English Jim was off, most of the time, on an exploring expedition into the principal towns of the northern part of the State, and it was by his absence that he afterwards escaped arrest with his confederates.

Early in March, 1850, officers had traced and watched the principal members of the gang, and preparations were made for their arrest. The manner of Bristol Bill's capture was described as follows:—"The house occupied by Warburton was owned by Low. There was but one house beyond it on that road—it was an obscure place, where scarcely any person goes in the winter season. Some one of our company called at the door in a familiar way, (it being at night,) saying—"Jump up, Bill, I want to see you." Warburton immediately came to the door, unfastened it, and we went in. The door opened into a room where he had apparently been in bed. Margaret O'Connor was lying in the bed. Warburton returned to the bed—he had on only his night-clothes. His trunks were packed as if for a journey."

The persons arrested about this time, in various places, were Marshall, Paul, Low, Meadows and his wife, and Warburton and Margaret O'Connor. The two women, however, were set at liberty. Great was the excitement among the Vermonters, at the "mare's nest" they had found. All the apparatus for counterfeiting had been captured, together with Bill's kit of instruments, and every sin in the calendar was charged to the prisoners by the astonished natives.

The particulars of the course and intentions of the gang will be adduced from the evidence which was elicited on the occasion of the examination and trial of the prisoners. This matter was interesting, and as Vermont is the last scene of Bill's operations thus far, we shall go into rather an extended review of the legal proceedings that followed his arrest.

The Drury, One-Eyed Thompson, Ashley, and Bennett, were in limbo in New York, and in Vermont was another section of the great confederacy of rascals in the hands of the law. This breaking-up of bands of rogues has never been exceeded by anything in the criminal history of our country

CHAPTER XXIII

EXAMINATION OF BRISTOL BILL AND HIS GANG—THEIR TRIAL—PAUL AND MARSHAL PROVE TRAITORS—THE "GAME UP."

The prisoners were brought before a Court of Inquiry, at Danville, the county town. The occasion drew together a large collection of people of all classes, and the court-room was crowded to suffocation. Bristol Bill and Meadows were kept in the closest custody, and had chains on their feet. They appeared to pay close attention to the proceedings, while the behavior of all the prisoners was quite decorous and becoming. Mrs. Meadows, with a beautiful child about eight months old, was present, and sat by her husband's side during the whole examination. The wife of Ephraim Low, and Margaret O'Connor, were also present, and both evinced the most anxious interest in the case.

The prisoners were arraigned on several counts—first, for having in their possession implements for making counterfeit paper money; second, for aiding and abetting in making said money; third, for larceny, in stealing certain dies, valued at \$1500, from William W. Wilson of Boston; fourth, for having in their possession certain burglarious tools, with the intent to break open stores, banks, &c. All the prisoners were charged with some one of these crimes. To prove these allegations, a large number of witnesses were examined and among them Peter M. Paul, a prisoner who "peached" at the outset. They were

on to describe the arrest, and narrated the manner of finding the counterfeit apparatus. A one-dollar bill on the Vermont Bank, with a portion of it erased, was found in Low's blank book or journal, on the day he was carried to jail. The dies were found under Low's bee-houses. Two presses and several dies had been discovered in one room of a building belonging to Paul; a transfer press had been there set up, and appearances indicated that it had been used but recently.

Wilson, the engraver, was one of the principal witnesses, and testified that the dies were his—that they were undoubtedly stolen by Meadows about a year before—that Meadows was a very skilful engraver, and had been employed by him to engrave the dies, which were intended solely for bank notes—and that from the dies a selection could be made for a perfect bill, with the exception of the signatures. Wilson said, that had not his dies been stolen, he had designed entering largely into the business of bank-note printing. He also described the use and design of the presses that had been captured—said they were such as all bank note printers used.

Peter M. Paul was called and sworn, and told his story, in substance as follows. He said that the first knowledge he had of the affair, was about a year previous. He was in Low's store, when Low took him aside, and said he would "tell him something." Paul stated that Low showed him two steel dies, and told him how they were obtained—that a man named M. had got them from the upper room of some building in Boston. The first that he (Paul) knew of the presses or machines, was in January, 1849, on the arrival of some goods for Low. He was told by Low that the machines were worth something, if he could get a man to work them. One press was bought by Low in New York, and sent by steamboat to Boston, where it remained for some time. It finally arrived in Groton with some of

Low's merchandise—was unboxed, and carried into Low's shed chamber. Paul said the next he knew of it, was in the following Fall, when Low wanted the press put out of the way, where it would be safe. It was again boxed up, and Marshall and Paul assisted in putting it under Low's woodshed, and threw some wood over it to conceal it. In January, (1850,) Low was about failing in business, and wished the press to be again moved. Paul, therefore, with the aid of Low and Marshall, conveyed it to an upper room in Paul's building, where the machine was set up under the direction of Meadows. Low wanted the press put in order, saying he wished to use it. Fourteen dies, for parts of bank-notes, were brought to the place by Low, and Meadows used them in the press to make impressions on copper plate. Some of the dies were of the figure "5," and others vignettes, &c. This was about the 1st of February.

Towards the close of the month, Paul said he was shown a copper plate, with two small impressions—a figure on the corner, and one in the middle. On the first of March, (Paul stated,) Low called at his shop, and said Meadows wanted to see him. He went in the evening, and saw the same plate he had seen before, having the figure of a female on one side, and a drove of cattle in the middle. The denomination of the bill was on one corner—the engraving on the plate seemed faint, and to consist of but outlines. There was a second-hand press, a small one, at Low's house, and he (Paul) had repaired them both. This was just before the other strangers came to Groton. Paul concluded by stating, that when he heard of the arrest (of Bristol Bill and Meadows,) Low came to his house, and asked where the small press was. Paul told him that he had thrown it away. The other press was then taken apart, and the pieces thrown out of doors. These pieces

were afterwards found, scattered over a large area.

Here the counsel for the prosecution rested their case, so far as the charge of counterfeiting, and aiding and abetting, was concerned. The next charge was for larceny, in stealing of the dies; and to prove this, Wilson testified as to how he had lost them, but could not tell who had stolen them; they were found, however, secreted under Low's beehives, a day or two after the arrest.

The prisoners were then charged with having in their possession certain burglari-ous tools—this charge being principally directed against Warburton, or Bristol Bill.

The Court decided that Low and Meadows should give bonds for their appearance at the June term of the Court, in the sum of \$4000 each—Marshall in \$3000—Warburton in \$2000—failing to obtain which they were remanded to prison. Paul gave bonds in the sum of \$5000 for his appearance.

But a short time elapsed, before Low was taken ill in prison, and died.

Marshall was persuaded by the State's Attorney to "peach" against his accomplices—Bill and Meadows who were considered the chiefs in the business—under a promise of protection from the State.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TRIAL OF BRISTOL BILL AND MEADOWS FOR COUNTERFEITING—PAUL AND MARSHALL USED AS STATE EVIDENCE—PRISONERS CONVICTED.

On the 12th of June, 1850, William H. Warburton and Christian Meadows were brought to trial on the charge of counterfeiting bank bills. Bristol Bill appeared to have suffered little from his imprisonment, looked hale and hearty, and endured the gaze of the crowded court-room, with perfect coolness and apparent indifference.

Meadows looked care-worn, while his wife, true to that affection which but burns the brighter as the clouds of adversity thicken, accompanied her husband, and sat by his side, holding in her arms a prattling infant, whose innocent face bore a strong contrast to the many stern and thoughtful visages that surrounded it. The appearance of Mrs Meadows was amiable, modest and unassuming, indicating little acquaintance or affinity with such scenes. She seemed thoughtful and sad—but was said to possess the utmost confidence in the integrity of her husband, and sincerely believed him innocent of all crimes.

The prisoners were arraigned. Bliss N. Davis, Esq, State's Attorney, and Abel Underwood, Esq, appeared for the Government. William H. Farrar and Charles B. Fletcher, Esqrs, of Boston, appeared as counsel for the defence. This array of legal talent was assurance that it was an occasion of no ordinary importance.

Peter M. Paul was brought forward as the first witness, and testified much the same as he did at the examination. He represented Low as being the prime mover in the establishment of the Bogus Bank at Groton, and that it was through his instrumentality that the dies were obtained, and the presses used for working the same. Paul, however, did not testify that any bank bills were actually completed.

Wilson, the engraver, was also again put on the witness stand, and gave his evidence concerning the dies.

A man named Sargent Field was introduced to identify an altered bank bill, which was found by the witness in Low's day-book, about the time of the arrest of the prisoners. It seems that Low was particular to have his books brought to him in jail, which led to their examination. Mr. Page, a cashier, testified that the altered bill was originally a one-dollar bill on the Vermont Bank. An engraved copper plate, found at Groton, was thought to be similar in its

impression to a Brandon Bank bill, and a very correct representation. Three boxes containing dies were found under Low's beehives. The boxes were marked 'axes,' and were directed to Peter M. Paul. Twelve dies were found in a barrel of feathers, in Low's house.

McLean Marshall, the tavern keeper, was called to the stand and sworn. The substance of his evidence was as follows. It appeared that Low had received a letter from New York, saying that men in that city would come to Groton to assist him in counterfeiting. About the last of December, 1849, Warburton and Meadows came to Marshall's house in Groton; and two days after, came a man whom they called "Jim," (*English Jim*.) These men made inquiries about Low, asking if he had got home from Boston, and saying that he had agreed to be at Groton when they arrived. When Low returned from Boston, arrangements were made by which Warburton and Jim were to reside on Low's farm, some distance from the village, to avoid suspicion, while Meadows was to remain near by, for convenience in their operations. Considerable talk was had among the whole party, concerning the manufacture of counterfeit money and the alteration of good bills. It was arranged that Meadows was to do the engraving and printing; and when the bills were completed, Warburton, Margaret O'Connor, and Jim were to pass and peddle them, with the assistance of Low. Various impressions of bank bills were made upon copper, in furtherance of their design, [some of which were produced in court, and identified by Marshall,] of the denomination of \$500, \$100, \$20, and \$10. It was designed to alter the bills of the Vermont Bank—and \$1000 were obtained at the Danville Bank, for the purpose of carrying on their schemes, but Low's sister-in-law got hold of the money before it reached Groton, and this circumstance somewhat interrupted

their proceedings. Warburton said he did not wish to "putter in small business," but desired to make a *great strike*. All in the party were to share in the spoils. It was understood by the confederates, that they were to appear in public as strangers to each other, and apparently ignorant of each other's business.

During the trial, every inch of ground was contested by the defence, while the government attorneys seemed determined that everything should be done to convict the prisoners. The court-house was densely crowded the whole time.

Marshall was subjected to a long, rigid, and searching cross-examination, with a view to destroy his credibility; for aside from his testimony, there was little evidence directly implicating Bristol Bill in the crime of counterfeiting. It was natural to regard with suspicion the statement of an accomplice, who, to save himself, had betrayed his companions. His testimony was not, however materially shaken.

Testimony was introduced on the part of respondents, showing that at the time of Warburton's arrest, his trunks were found to be closely packed with clothing and wardrobe, as if he was about to remove—that something was then said by Warburton about going away.

The counsel for the prisoners pleaded their defence in a most persevering and creditable manner, while their clients watched the proceedings throughout with the keenest scrutiny. Bristol Bill took copious notes of the testimony.

When Marshall was introduced as a witness, Bill's eyes flashed with suppressed indignation, while his lip curled with contempt of the cowardly betrayer. Meadows' demeanor lost something of its former confidence, while tears started to the eyes of his wife, whose face wore a most sorrowful and heart-broken expression.

A verdict of guilty was rendered by the jury, and all hope was at an end.

CHAPTER XXV.

SECOND TRIAL OF BRISTOL BILL—ATTEMPTS
AT BURGLARY—BANKS IN DANGER—
“PEACHING” BY THE WHOLESALE—
ASTONISHING DEVELOPMENTS.

William H. Warburton, alias William Darlington, alias Bristol Bill, was next put to trial alone, charged with “having in his possession certain burglarious tools, intended and designed for feloniously and burglariously breaking open banks and bank vaults,” &c. The third and fourth counts in the indictment charged him with intent to break open the Bank of Newbury, the Bank of Caledonia, the Bank of Montpelier, the Bank of Irasburgh, and the Bank of Danville—the last count charging the offence on Bristol Bill and “a certain person unknown.”

The prisoner, answering to the name of Warburton, pleaded not guilty.

Col. J. Kent was the first person sworn, and stated that he assisted in the arrest of Bill. He was put on the track by Wilson, and the arrest was made in consequence of some dies having been stolen from Wilson. Kent said that his party commenced a search of the premises as soon as daylight would permit. In the cellar wall they found a piece of cast steel saw-plate, (meaning a piece of mill-saw, from 12 to 18 inches long, upon which some experiments had been made with a burglarious implement.) The plate was tucked back in the wall, as if for concealment. In the chamber of the house, were found several bars of iron about four inches wide; also, two short stubbed scythes, about two feet long, the butts of which were wound and wrapped with brown paper, as if to form a handle.

Robert Darling was one of the party of arrest, and said they were directed to examine the dung heap. They accordingly commenced to dig through, and after about half an hour's search they struck on a steel bar, octagonal in shape, sharpened down

like a wedge at one end, and a little hooked or turned at the other. They also found a crank, belonging to a boring machine. The balance of the machine was dug out of the snow at the rear of the house. These articles were nailed up in a box. [The box and tools were exhibited in court.]

Alden Heath testified that he drove the mail team between Groton and Wells River. One day, at the express office he found a box wrapped up in thick brown paper, directed to McLean Marshall, Groton. The box weighed 40 or 50 pounds. Witness carried it to Marshall, and he paid the freight. Heath then proceeded to say that there was a stranger about Groton during the winter, in company with Warburton, and he had heard some one call him George Green. On Sunday, Jan 6th. he saw Warburton, Meadows, and the stranger in the sitting-room of Marshall's tavern; Marshall and Low were also present; the room was darkened, and the curtains drawn. He afterwards saw Green on the road to Wells River, with a valise in his hand.

Daniel Coffran was sworn. He said he knew Warburton at Groton the past winter. He (witness) was the officer who made the levy upon Low's property at the time of his failure. The property was put into Marshall's hands for safe keeping. One evening, Coffran saw a horse which he had attached, in harness, standing in Marshall's shed; Low and Warburton were there in private conversation. Warburton shortly unhitched the horse, and drove to the stable where he put one or two articles into the sleigh—one of them looked like a box; he then drove off towards West Groton.

Mr. O. C. Hale, cashier of the Bank of Newbury, was next examined. The machine taken from Bill was shown to the witness, who described its operations as follows:—“By putting in an iron, which so shaped as to enter a key-hole, and then turning the head crosswise, a person is pro-

vented from drawing it back To this, by means of a screw, the boring machine is fastened and hugged tight to the iron door, when the cutting process is commenced by putting on the long or short crank, as occasion may require. There appear to be here three different bits of the same size; and with them all in good repair, to replace dull ones, the machine is capable of boring through the iron door of any vault in any Bank that I know of." Such, reader was the cashier's imperfect description of one of the most costly and ingenious instruments ever used by an accomplished burglar.

Mr. Hale then proceeded as follows. He said that on a certain Monday morning, the past winter, he found that one of the shutters of the Bank of Newbury opened harder than usual—he could hardly get it open, and on examination discovered that some kind of an instrument, like a sharp iron bar, had been introduced between the two parts of the shutters, upon the edge of which indentations were found. It was evident that some person had tried to force off the hinges. The bricks at the side of the window had been broken and crumbled apparently by prying over them. Mr. Hale said he had applied the bar (taken from Warburton) to the indentations on the shutters, and it fitted them precisely. There was snow on the ground, and some slight tracks were discovered.

Jonathan Peck, a blacksmith, said that he saw Warburton and a stranger pass thro' Groton village one Sunday afternoon. They had Marshall's team, and when near the village, the stranger got out and went on foot, apparently as if they did not know each other.

Marvin Whitcher described the stranger that had been seen with Warburton, and who went by the name of Green. He saw this man go off in the stage, a few days before Warburton's arrest. [The reader will of course surmise that this stranger was none other than English Jim.]

Horace Pierce, the keeper of the Coosack House at Wells River, was next sworn. He said he saw Warburton at his house several times during the winter. At one time he said several days, until a woman came whom he called his wife. There was another person occasionally with him and they left in company. Warburton was at Pierce's house on the 5th of March, and was waiting for something which he expected to come by the cars. Wilson was at Pierce's hotel, and informed the landlord that Warburton was Bristol Bill.

McLean Marshall, the principal witness for the government, as on the trial for counterfeiting, again took the stand, and made a long statement concerning his knowledge of the prisoner. He commenced by saying that about the 1st of January, 1850, Warburton and Meadows came to his inn in Groton. They came on Wednesday; and the next Saturday after, came a man whom they called *Jim*. It was agreed that Warburton and Jim should go out to Low's farm at West Groton, and Marshall carried them out, together with their furniture. About the first of February, a box was brought from Wells River, directed to Marshall, for which he paid the freight. He had been apprised by Low that such a box would come for Warburton, and he was on the look out for it. Marshall, at this part of his testimony, proceeded as follows;—

"I carried the box up into my barn chamber, and laid it in the hay. I tore off my name the first thing after I got hold of it. Warburton came to my inn the next night, and enquired for the box. I told him that it had come, and where it was, and requested him to see it. We went up stairs, and he showed me a machine or instrument, with which, he said, he could cut through any iron door, or walk into any Bank in Vermont, and told how quick he could do it. He put it partly together, put in a crank, and showed me the operation of it,

He then put it into a sleigh which stood close by the barn door."

Marshall then proceeded to testify, that shortly afterwards he went to Warburton's house in Groton, and was there further explained the process of boring through vaults. Bill showed him a piece of cast steel mill saw, and told what he had done with it. There was a cut upon the saw plate, and Jim said it was much worse than a Bank vault door, as it was difficult to hold it, and a bad thing to fasten the machine into. Bill and Jim said they could bore through a Bank door as quick again as they could through that piece of saw plate. Marshall proceeded to testify that the plan of operations and things to be done were talked of in his presence. It was first arranged to go to St. Johnsbury, while the Commissioners were receiving deposits on Bank shares, and see if the money could not be got. Warburton and his wife (Margaret O'Connor) went in a horse and sleigh, and Jim went in the stage. When they returned, Bill and Jim both said they could not make out anything, as two were kept in the building as a guard. They related how, at a tavern, they had gone into the room of a man whom they supposed to have considerable money, without waking him, and taken his carpet bag, which they carried to the stable, where they struck a light with a match, and examined the contents of the bag, but found no money; they had then returned to the man's room, and replaced the bag, without disturbing the owner. Bristol Bill and Jim returned to Groton together, leaving Margaret at St. Johnsbury. Warburton and Low talked over the matter of Bank robbery. Warburton (as Marshall testified) said he knew of a Bank which he had examined, and thought he could enter—the Bank at Stanstead. Low advised him to try the Bank at Irasburgh—for it was apart from any other building, and there was a good chance. Warburton and Jim then took Marshall's

team, and went to St. Johnsbury; from thence Bill took Margaret carried her to Irasburgh, and left her there. She was to watch the Bank, and see if any one slept in it; if not, that Bank was to be attempted. Bill and Jim then went to Stanstead, and watched the bank building at that place, they even made arrangements to enter the Bank, but, when the appointed hour came, they were prevented by the appearance of a person who came along and unlocked the door, entered the building, and went to bed. The burglars gave that up, and returned to Groton. Marshall said he had a talk with them, that night, about their luck. In a day or two after, Warburton came to him, and wanted some money. Marshall furnished Bill with a little to go after Margaret; they returned that week. A consultation was then held concerning future operations. It was arranged to visit the Chelsea Bank and the Bank of Montpelier. Warburton and Jim finally concluded to go to Chelsea first. They watched one night, but found that some person slept in the Bank. They then went to Montpelier—but discovered that somebody slept in one Bank, and there was a shoemaker's shop close to the other, in which some one also slept. They then returned to Groton, and the whole party had another talk. The Wells River and Danville Banks were both spoken of. Bristol Bill said he had been inside of the Wells River Bank—that the vault doors were heavy, but he thought he could go through them. He said there was no trouble in getting into the Danville Bank, only that some one slept overhead. Low afterwards told Marshall that they (Warburton and Jim) had made an attempt on the Wells River Bank, but got frightened away. This, as Marshall thought, was about the middle of February. The Derry Bank was also talked about—Bill said he could get into it, but that the money was not current, or something to that effect. Low said it would do well enough, and

urged an attempt. Bill would not agree to go there, but said that something would be done yet.

Marshall, in his testimony, stated that he understood blacksmithing, and had forged about a dozen keys for Warburton, who said he wanted them to open bureaux, trunks, and doors of houses. Just before the arrest of the parties, Bill told Marshall that Jim had carried the keys off with him. A bar of steel, taken from Bristol Bill, was exhibited to Marshall in court, and he said:—"I made this steel bar, or sharpened it from one which Warburton gave me. Low gave me a pattern to fix it by, and said Warburton wished it fixed by the pattern."

On the cross-examination of Marshall, he stated that if money had been obtained, it was to be put into Low's hands, for fear of the burglars being followed and searched. He was sure that Warburton and Jim had the boring machine with them when they went to Irasburgh and Stanstead.

Calvin Morrill, Esq., was next sworn as a witness. He was one of the Commissioners to receive subscriptions for shares in Passumpsic Bank. The commissioners commenced their duties on the 22nd of January, and were engaged some ten or twelve days. There was a great number of people at their room every day, and the witness recollected seeing Warburton there. Morrill said he noticed the stranger because he spoke to him, and said in an enquiring manner—"You are having a new Bank here?" Witness therefore supposed that the stranger had been ignorant of the fact, and was not there to subscribe for stock. From the position in which Warburton sat, the door being open, he could see deposits made in the safe in an adjoining room. Witness thought that he sat there for some half an hour.

A great deal more evidence, of a various nature, was introduced by the government, but very little for the defence

Messrs. Farrar and Fletcher, counsel for the prisoner, exerted themselves most ably in his behalf, and, considering the lack of foundation on which to build, they acquitted themselves with much credit.

After an able charge from the Judge, the jury retired—and soon returned with a verdict of not guilty.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE BURGLARS—BRISTOL BILL'S ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE FROM JAIL—HIS SKILL AND INGENUITY.

We for the present leave Bristol Bill and Meadows in jail, awaiting sentence, and take a retrospective view of a few incidents concerning the gang.

It is true that Bristol Bill and English Jim staid some days in St. Johnsbury, with the hope of entering the iron safe which contained the deposits of the stock-holders of a new Bank; but a man was employed to stay in the room by night, and it was too narrowly watched by day, for the burglars to make the experiment.

The following incident we have on good authority. English Jim, who is a strongly made and vigorous man, went in company with Low to Montpelier, with the purpose of robbing the Vermont Bank. They designed to do it in a most daring and open manner, viz:—by knocking down the cashier, securing the money, and locking the cashier into the vault. Jim and Low actually went to the Bank, intending to carry out their bold plan. As they entered however, Mr. Page, the cashier, must have noticed something singular in the manner of his visitors, and suspected their object. He shrunk not from their presence, but stepped affably towards them, with a smile upon his countenance, and spoke kindly to them. His conduct so took the hardened men by surprise, that they were

powerless. They confessed the object of their visit, and their meditated injury to the cashier. Mr. Page talked to each of them "like a father to his child," and the robbers went away quite subdued in spirit. They afterwards gave as their reason for not accomplishing the robbery, that "*Mr. Page treated them so politely, their hearts failed them!*"

While Bristol Bill and Margaret O'Connor were on a cruise through the State, surveying the locality of different Banks, they were never in a single instance suspected of their design. At St. Johnsbury, they remained for a considerable time at the principal hotel. Bill passed for a travelling gentleman of leisure, while Margaret was considered his spouse. The accomplishments of the lady attracted no little attention and good will, and it was her wont, on each evening, to seat herself at the piano in the parlor of the hotel, and charm the company present with her skillful playing and rare melodious voice.

It was a fortunate occurrence for English Jim, that he departed from the scene of operations a few days before the arrest of his confederates; otherwise, he would have participated in their fate, and now be an inmate of the prison at Windsor.

The most extraordinary performances of Bristol Bill was his attempt to escape from the jail at Danville, while awaiting trial. The prisoners during the day were kept in light and airy cells, but at night were placed separately in what might be called dungeons, and were heavily ironed. During the day, Meadows and Bill were in one cell.

It so happened that the clerk of the county wanted a large seal engraved, and Meadows was permitted to execute the work. For this purpose, a few of his tools were allowed him until he could finish the job. In accordance with Meadows' previous request, the jailer one day brought him an engraver's square, which he needed in his

work. This was formed of a thin piece of steel about six inches long, with a smaller piece turning on its surface by a pivot. The moment that the jailer had gone, Bill who had quickly noticed the article as Meadows received it through a hole in the door seized the square, and commenced separating its parts. Meadows was surprised and wroth, and attempted to interfere; but Bill was sullen and determined, and threw his comrade from him. "A man must be a d—d fool, when they bring us tools, not to use them!" said the burglar, and he set himself to work industriously. He separated the two pieces of steel, and, taking the larger one, began to rub one end of it upon the stove, and also on the stone floor. After some hours labor, he succeeded in getting it quite sharp, and almost as good as a chisel. Of the smaller piece of steel, he then made a saw. His next step was to mount on a table, and remove the stove pipe, from which he cut out several narrow strips of iron. The pipe was then replaced in such a manner that the cuts would escape observation. Untiring in his labor, he took two of these strips, polished them so as to resemble steel, and then made a counterfeit square, almost equal in appearance to that which Meadows had received from jailer. Here was a great feat already accomplished, and would have been worthy any mechanic who possessed all the requisite tools. When the jailer called for the square, the false one made from the stove pipe was given him, and he went away without suspicion.

Bill, the next day, cut off a larger piece of the funnel, and hid the defect by setting the stove further back. He cut the iron into strips as before, and by some means rivetted them together to about the thickness of a large key. It is probable that he had some inferior tools to work with, other than those he made of the piece of steel; and we suppose it possible that he was aided in his task by a hot fire. While en

gaged on this branch of his undertaking, he had saved a portion of the brown bread given him as food, and also some meat gravy. To these ingredients he added some powdered charcoal, and kept the whole in his hat until a sufficient quantity had been obtained. That done, he kneaded them into a solid loaf, and baked it. Shaving off the top, he carefully made a mould as near as he could guess to the size of the key he intended to make—viz: a key to the cell in which he was confined at night. The next of Bill's proceedings was to pick out little bits of lead from around the ends of the window gratings, and he finally obtained enough of the metal for his purpose. With a piece of the stove funnel he made a cup, and in it melted his lead. Running the liquid metal into his brown-bread mould he found himself possessed of an uncouth **BLANK KEY**. Bill, by this time, had derived some assistance from Meadows, who was nothing loth to give his aid when he could see a hope of escape. Notwithstanding the prisoners were often strictly searched, they managed their affairs so shrewdly that the nothing was detected.

One night, when Bill retired to his lower cell, in company with the turnkey, he took with him his leaden cast, and also some of his gravy preparation. Irons were put upon him as usual, and the officer left his candle near the door, while he proceeded to examine Bill's bedding, &c. As his back was turned, Bill suddenly whipped the candle from its socket, bit a piece from the bottom, and secreted it in his mouth. When the jailer had gone, Bill proceeded to take off his irons, as he had done every night for some time—putting them on in morning.

Among other things, Bill had obtained possession of two bits of looking-glass; but the precise manner in which he used them, has passed from our memory. They were however, so placed that he obtained, by the aid of his bit of candle, a reflection of the

key-hole from the outside. In the door was a small diamond hole, and by putting his arm through to the shoulder, Bill found that he could just reach the lock. On his blank key he then spread a thick coating of cold meat gravy, and after some exertion managed to get it into the key-hole, and obtained a very fair impression of the lock.

The next day, Bill whittled out the wards of his leaden key according to the impressions made in the substance that covered it. Another night was necessary to complete the model, and Bill finally was satisfied that if his key was of harder metal than lead he could open the door of his cell. By day, therefore, Bill labored incessantly to make a key of iron, after his leaden pattern, from the strips of stove pipe which he had riveted together. By dint of heating his iron in the fire, and cutting and hammering with his imperfect tools, the ingenious man was ere long possessed of an instrument, which, though little resembling a key in appearance, would unlock the door of one of the strongest cells in the jail.

Bill waited impatiently for the night, and when it came he inserted his key in the lock, actually opened the door, and stood undetected in the main entry of the prison. Here was most of his undertaking accomplished, and he felt that his early skill and trade had not been lost upon him. Proceeding to the door of Meadows, he found that his key fitted that also. Bill's companion was no little pleased to have his irons removed, and to be shown how to replace them in the morning. The twain consulted as to their next move, and it was agreed that McLean Marshall should accompany them when they escaped; but it was considered advisable not to make him acquainted with their project until they were quite ready to depart. It was found that a different key must be made for Marshall's door, and Bill silently took an impression of the lock. He then retired to his cell, and so arranged things as to avoid

discovery For some days he busied himself in making a key to Marshall's door. During the intervening nights, Bill would leave his cell, and employ himself with his saw, upon the gratings of a small window in the entry, which he at last so loosened that an exit could at any time be quickly made. The key was finished and all things were ready for an escape. Bill had worked like a dog for about a month, in perfecting his arrangements, and he now felt elated at his success thus far, and the bright hope of obtaining his freedom. The thought of outwitting the officers of the law, for whom Bill professed the most supreme contempt, was sufficient recompense for him to undertake almost anything, however arduous it might be, or whatever the consequences of detection.

Towards the close of a certain day, Marshall was given a hint from his comrades, that an escape was intended that night, and that he would be called for. Bill and Meadows had no idea but that Marshall would welcome the news, and joyfully co-operate with them in their plans.

The night was dark, and most favorable for the undertaking. All was silent as the grave, save the cold gusts of wind that wailed fitfully without, or whistled shrilly through the gloomy passages of the jail. As he had done for many a night before, Bill slipped the iron gyves from his wrists and ancles, and prepared to depart. Softly unlocking the door of his cell, he stepped into the damp corridor, and listened. No sound came, that betokened watch or detection. The door of Meadows' cell was unlocked, the counterfeiter's irons unloosed, and the two criminals stood untrammelled and ready for any emergency. As they advanced towards Marshall's cell, their hearts beating exultingly with high hopes of success, it may have been fortunate for the jailer or those who kept watch, that the prisoners managed their movements so

privately. Bristol Bill and Christian Meadows would have proved dangerous men to meet in such an emergency, and desperation would have caused most bloody disaster to those who afforded opposition to their escape.

Softly creeping along the corridor of the jail, they reached Marshall's cell, unlocked the door and entered. Instead of meeting Marshall exulting in the hope of escape, and ready for the adventure, they found him on the bed, writhing and groaning under the effects of a severe attack of colic, which afterwards proved all a pretence. He said he could not go with them that night, and begged them to postpone their escape. Moved with sympathy for the wretch, Bill concluded not to depart until they could all go together, and he and Meadows returned to their cells. We might almost say that the jail was wide open for them—so perfect were all their plans of exit. Had Bill escaped that night, we doubt if he would have been again captured. But his generosity—for Bill possesses no little of that quality—made him a sacrifice to the mean treachery of Marshall.

The next day, Bliss N. Davis, Esq., the State's Attorney, was sent for to visit the prison. He came, and had a long private conversation with McLean Marshall, a portion of which Bristol Bill overheard from his cell. The substance of the parley was, that Marshall informed the attorney of the prisoners' intent to escape, and their means for so doing—that they had false keys, &c. ; he also agreed to become a State's evidence upon the ensuing trial, and testify to every particular concerning the recent schemes for counterfeiting and burglary provided a *nol pros* could be entered on the charges against himself. The bargain was made, and the next day came an order for Marshall's release from prison. At the trials, in June, he swore to a long array of facts, as the reader will have observed in our account of the legal proceedings.

Search was accordingly made of the persons and cells of Bristol Bill and Meadows, for the implements intended to work their escape. But not a single article could be found. The keys were probably thrown down the privy vault. Bill's indignation knew no bounds and he swore vengeance on the paltroon who had betrayed him.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A SPEECH BY WARBURTON—WARBURTON AND MEADOWS SENTENCED—TERRIBLE SCENE IN THE COURT-ROOM—BRISTOL BILL'S ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY.

On Friday morning, June 21st. 1850, the convicted prisoners were brought into court, to receive the sentence of the judge. The day previous, arguments had been made by counsel for arrest of judgment and the granting of a new trial. The judge proceeded to overrule both motions, and dismissed them in a summary manner.—The Court then asked if anything could be said in mitigation of sentence.

Bristol Bill's counsel rose, and began to plead in his behalf. He referred to the age of Bill—should he outlive the usual sentence, he would leave the prison an old man, and be cast out upon the world destitute of all resources, and with no means of gaining an honest livelihood.

At this juncture, Bill, who sat restlessly in his chair, cried out in a loud manner—"Don't beg any mercy for me, at the hands of this Court!" This remark somewhat took the counsel aback, and he replied that he would ask no mercy for a man who did not desire it. He then commenced a plea for Meadows, who sat weeping bitterly.

The judge finally called upon Warburton, and asked if he had anything to say why sentence should not now be passed on

him. Bill rose in a perfectly cool and deliberate manner, and made quite a lengthy speech, which was tinctured with no little shrewd argument and cutting satire. He commenced by saying that he was sorry his counsel had desired mercy in his behalf. He (Bill) had lived thus long in the world, without asking favors of any one, especially of courts. All he had desired in the present case was to have a fair trial, and to see justice properly administered. But he had received precious little justice since he had been in the State of Vermont. He complained of the mode of trial, and of the haste in bringing the case before the present term of the court, when he had desired a postponement, that he might procure witnesses in his behalf from other States. He conceived that sufficient reasons had been offered in the form of affidavits, for a continuance of the case. Bill then went on to complain that the court had been influenced by fear, and charged that popular excitement had driven the case to trial and managed the conviction. He then denounced, in bitter terms, the course which had been taken by the State's Attorney; that officer had repeatedly come to the jail, and finally, by dint of hiring, had brought the perjured Marshall from his cell to the witness-stand. He furthermore complained of being brought to trial on the charge of counterfeiting, when he had been discharged on that complaint at a previous examination—the government, at the same time, releasing the man who was bound over at the examination, and putting him on the witness stand. Bill declared, most emphatically, that his trial should not have come on while public opinion was so violent and vindictive.—Popular excitement, he said, had affected the judge on the bench and the jury in their box. Marshall's statements were false, and Bill denied that he had ever seen the counterfeiting presses, plates, &c., or that he was present at any of the consultations alluded to. He had come to Vermont a

very different business; and at the time of his arrest, his trunks were packed, and he was preparing to leave town the next morning. The prisoner then spoke of the motions for arrest of judgment and a new trial, and argued them in a manner which would have done credit to many of the legal profession. Among other points, he contended that the bill plate had not been sufficiently identified. Speaking of punishment he told the Court that he had as lief have a sentence for fifteen years as for one.

Bill's speech caused some remarks from the Court, when the prisoner again replied. He inveighed severely against McLean Marshall, and charged him with being a perjured man; he also declared that Marshall had been well drilled by the government prosecutor. Shaking his finger at Mr. Davis, Bill added with peculiar emphasis—"And your pupil, Mr. State's Attorney, made an appearance on the witness stand creditable to the instructions of his master."

Warburton was then sentenced to ten years confinement at hard labor in the State Prison.

Meadows was next called up, and the unhappy man, in direct contrast to the manner of his confederate, pleaded most affectingly for mercy; while the sobs of his wretched wife joined in the vain petition. But justice was inexorable, and Meadows received the same sentence as Bristol Bill. Despair fell upon the heart of the counterfeiter; he heard his doom, and sank back in his seat, completely prostrated in spirit.

Bill, however, maintained his usual outward composure; but to one who knew him, there might have been seen a "lurking devil in his eye," that silently intimated a tempest in his heart. He had boldly complained of injustice—he felt that he had been wronged—and *now* he was a doomed convict for the ten best years of his remaining life. No greater punishment could scarcely be inflicted upon him, and it mat-

ered little what his future acts might be. Even as he had expressed himself, so he felt a bitter hatred towards Bliss N. Davis, the prosecuting attorney, who, as Bill charged, had procured his conviction by unfair and unjustifiable means. Bristol Bill, although a man apparently always self-possessed, is inwardly swayed by the most violent passions. To a friend he is a man of honor—to an enemy he is a quick and dangerous foe. An injury is never forgotten, and is sure at some time to bring down retribution on the head of the offender. A kindness, and good service, are treasured in Bill's heart, and he would never lose an opportunity of proving his gratitude. Such is, or was, Bristol Bill. But the author is inclined to believe that the severe trials to which the celebrated burglar has been subjected for the last few months, have somewhat changed the complexion of his natural characteristics. It seems as though his once natural shrewdness and cool determination had forsaken him, and recklessness and desperation usurped their place. But the scene we are about to describe will exhibit to the reader something of Bill's state of mind when the judgment of the court had been passed upon him.

There was no prisoner's box in the court-room, and Warburton stood just outside the bar. He wore no handcuffs, but on his legs were heavy fetters which barely allowed him to shuffle along. As the judge concluded his sentence of Meadows, Mr. Davis, the State's Attorney, arose from his seat, went around the bar, and stooped down to whisper in Meadows' ear. Bristol Bill, with his hands behind him, and his intention suspected by no one, advanced slowly towards the government officer. Suddenly his hand rose, and then a hitherto concealed weapon descended upon the neck of his victim. One terrific shriek, and the words "He's killed me—I am a dead man!"—and Bliss N. Davis fell back

covered with his own blood. The weapon remained sticking in his neck, and the unfortunate man made an ineffectual effort to draw it out. It was withdrawn by a friend, and proved to be the blade of case-knife, with a handkerchief wound tightly round the end of it, as a substitute for a handle. It is supposed that Bill had pilfered and secreted the knife while dining at the hotel, whither he was daily allowed to go in custody of officers.

This scene in the court-room beggars all description. The State's Attorney appeared to be gasping in the last agonies of death. Consternation seized upon every one. The judge hastily adjourned the court, and flew from his bench; members of the jury fled affrighted from their seats; while many of the spectators leaped unceremoniously from the windows. The constables and officers of the court partook of the general alarm. A few, however, supported the bleeding form of Davis, and conveyed him from the room.

After giving the blow, Bill stood immovable, and gazed silently upon his victim; but on observing the terror pictured in every face, and the flight of nearly every one from the vicinity of his presence, he burst into a wild unearthly laugh, and exclaimed—"I hope to God that I have killed him! If the lying Marshall was here, I would serve him the same!" It was some time before the officers mustered courage to approach the prisoner, but they finally began to huddle around him, and speak of securing him with irons. But not one of the number dared make the attempt. Bill, with his arms folded upon his breast, paced slowly backwards and forwards, and said that were it not for his fetters he would not stay long where he was. Frequently pausing, he would gaze sternly upon the instruments of the law, and call them "damned fools"—"a pack of cowards"—and other opprobrious epithets.—He was asked if he had any more knives,

and he replied "No!" in a voice of thunder. He was then asked if he would go down to jail, and he replied "yes." On a motion being made to advance with a pair of irons, Bill declared that no irons should be put upon him—there was no necessity for it—he had no animosity against any one present. "But," said he, "bring me McLean Marshall, and I will butcher him as I have Davis; you may then take me out upon the common, and hang me without judge or jury!"

The sheriff and constables still stood in fear of Bill, and were suspicious of his will and intentions. After a while, one of his counsel approached, and asked Bill if he might not iron him. The final reply was—"yes, I will let *you*—but those damned cowards shall not!" The counsel then took the handcuffs, and fastened them upon Bill's wrists. When this was done, the constables were quite active in closing upon their prey. A large party of them accompanied Bill to jail, where he was so loaded with irons that he was scarcely able to sit up. They put extra fetters on his limbs, bars of iron on his breast and back, and chained him closely to the wall. No wild beast was ever so secured.

The next day, Bristol Bill and Meadows were conveyed to the State Prison at Windsor.

After a lingering period of agony, Mr. Davis recovered from his severe wound, and is now well. Bill had evidently aimed for the jugular vein, and the difference of half an inch in the direction of the blow would have caused instant death. It certainly was a narrow escape.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BRISTOL BILL IN JAIL—HIS SCHEMES OF
ESCAPE—EXTRAORDINARY STATEMENTS
CONCERNING THE TORPEDO CASE.

In order to follow closely every incident connected with the more recent history of Bristol Bill, it will be necessary at times to retrace our dates, and cause our work to present many disconnected and detached chapters.

The reader has thus far seen Darlington tried, convicted, and sent to the State Prison. We will now again refer to the period when Bill was immured in Danville jail, awaiting the action of the law. He knew that he was in a "tight place"—that every appearance was against him—and that all would be done that could be, to secure his conviction. His cunning and ingenuity were brought into operation, and at one time promised at least partial success.

At this period, the second trial of the Drury, in New York, was near at hand—the first having resulted in a disagreement of the jury. Thompson, who was a leading witness in the case, in fact the accuser, was of course not looked upon with much friendly feeling by Bristol Bill.—The idea suggested itself to the mind of Darlington, that if he could lead the District Attorney of New York to believe that he could throw much new light on the Drury case, means might be taken to convey him thither, to be used as a witness. Once in New York, and out of the immediate clutches of the Vermont authorities, he would have taken care that he never again crossed the line of the Green Mountain State. Bill therefore prepared an affidavit—the truth of which must be judged by developments yet in the womb of time—and sent it to John McKeon,

Esq., District Attorney of the city of New York. It reads as follows:—

"I, W. H. Warburton, better known as Wm. Darlington, do hereby state upon oath, that from facts in my possession, I am perfectly assured that the torpedo box was made by a relative of Wm. H. Thompson's, by order of said Wm. H. Thompson; the explosive matter it contained was contrived and put therein by said Wm. H. Thompson; that said Wm. H. Thompson was employed to do it by a person not herein mentioned, for which he was to receive the sum of \$500 if it succeeded in killing Thomas Warner, Esq., of 18 City Hall Place, in the City of New York. I, W. H. Warburton, further saith, that said Wm. H. Thompson did fill said box with combustible and explosive matter, and so constructed it that in opening said box the matter therein contained should ignite and explode, and thereby destroy and take away the life of said Thomas Warner, Esq., and that Wm. H. Thompson did carry, or caused to be carried, the said torpedo box to the residence of said Thomas Warner, Esq., of 18 City Hall Place, in the city of New York, and delivered, or caused to be delivered, to an inmate of said Thomas Warner's house, the said torpedo box, directed to said Thomas Warner, Esq., with the intention of taking the life of said Thomas Warner, Esq. I, W. H. Warburton, otherwise Wm. Darlington, do further state upon oath, that I did in company act in concert with the said W. H. Thompson, in the rat council, as it was so termed in the *Police Gazette*, and I do most solemnly swear that said rat concern was a foul and black conspiracy, got up by the said Wm. H. Thompson, for the purpose of convicting Drury, and thereby save himself, he being the principal actor in the torpedo affair. I can also testify to other nefarious transactions of Wm. H. Thompson, some of which are now under your notice, where he is the accuser at the same

time he is the principal culprit. I remain
sir your humble servant,

"W^M H. WARBURTON, otherwise

"W^M. DARLINGTON."

In connection with this affidavit, Bill sent the following letter to Horace F. Clark, Esq., a lawyer in New York city:

"DANVILLE, April 5, 1850.

"HORACE F. CLARK, Esq:—Sir—I write to inform you that I made an affidavit, and swore to it on the 26th of March, and forwarded it to J. McKeon, District Attorney for the city of New York, stating that I was ready to come forward and show, from facts in my possession, that Thompson was the man that made the torpedo. I also told him that the whole of the cases got up against Drury were got up by perjury and conspiracy, which I can prove. I also stated in a document accompanying my affidavit to Mr. McKeon, that the rat council was a foul and black conspiracy, and that Thompson, Wilkes and myself were the conspirators, and I further stated that Thompson came on to Boston, and got certain persons to swear to affidavits of his own framing for the purpose of getting Drury indicted by the Grand Jury, as soon as he was arrested; and I tell you Sir, if Drury goes to trial he will have more perjury to contend with than he is aware of, unless I am brought to York, as it is not in the power of any man to show the case in its proper light, except my brother conspirators, and they dare not do it. After the base, foul and indefatigable exertions they have, and are using, they are bound to get a conviction, Wilkes to save his reputation and Thompson to save his liberty. Now, sir, my motive in writing to you is, because I cannot get an answer from Mr. McKeon as yet, or A. L. Jordan. I wrote to them again last Sunday, begging them not to bring Drury to trial until they had seen me, as it is their duty to do, in justice to the man, and also the community. There are two persons

who call themselves friends of mine, who undertook to see you about this matter; but I fear to trust them, as I know Wilkes has got a great deal to fear from me, and he has, no doubt, heard of the step I have taken in this matter; therefore he has been the cause of McKeon not paying any attention to my affidavit or my letters. He is well aware, and so is Thompson, that if I come to the city their case is damned, and also one or both of themselves. I fear, sir, you have been kept ignorant of this matter, and the parties who were authorized to see you on my account have gone to Wilkes instead, and he and Warner will endeavor to get Mr. McKeon to bring the trial on immediately, for fear I should come on and foil them. In fact, sir, I should not be surprised if even now the trial is going on, while I am writing; but God forbid. And now, sir, if you feel any interest in this matter, and the trial has not been, I trust you will postpone the trial until you have seen me; and let me beg of you sir, to come immediately upon receipt of this, or send me an answer, stating your intentions, and also whether or not you have had any communications with any person respecting me and this business.

"I remain, sir, yours respectfully,

W. H. WARBURTON,

otherwise W. DARLINGTON."

The above affidavit and letter created considerable excitement among certain parties in New York, but did not procure the presence of Bristol Bill, as he had hoped for.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MARGARET O'CONNOR—HER RECAPTURE IN VERMONT—CONVEYED TO NEW YORK—HER ESCAPE FROM THE TOMBS.

It will be recollected that Margaret O'Connor was conveyed from Boston to New York, to be used as a witness in the Drury case and there remained on bail,

until Bristol Bill and Mead had formed the scheme of going to Vermont, where she escaped in their company.

Nothing was known of her whereabouts until the arrest of Bill and his party in Vermont was published in the newspapers. Thomas Warner, and Messrs. Wilkes and Stanley of the *Police Gazette*, immediately started from New York, and went to Danville, to recapture the lady, and arrived there just as the primary examination of the prisoners was concluded. But Margaret had flown, and the bird was not then to be found. She had too much shrewdness to be easily caged, and, knowing that she could afford no assistance to Bill, as soon as it was sure that he was "fast," she secretly left the town. But by some stratagem, Wilkes obtained a clue to her travels from some person who was cognizant of her plans. Margaret was therefore slowly traced from town to town, until she was suddenly surprised in Manchester, N. H., and accompanied to New York, where, to make sure of her future presence, she was lodged in the Tombs.

The celebrated consort of Bristol Bill remained in the city prison for several months; but confinement never weighed down her spirit, or dulled the natural cunning of her mind. She was ever ready to take advantage of all circumstances that might inure to her benefit.

During the month of July, 1850, a woman by the name of Dobbins, the wife of a laboring man, was arrested, and confined in the Tombs on a charge of drunkenness. Margaret O'Connor here became acquainted with Mrs. Dobbins, and also with her husband Thomas, who frequently visited his imprisoned wife. Before Mrs. Dobbins left the Tombs, a plan was concocted between her and Margaret, to effect her (Margaret's) escape, for which Mrs. Bristol Bill was to pay Dobbins the sum of \$100. A false key was then required, and a pattern of the genuine key was given to

Dobbins, who procured one like it. Now the next job was to place the false key into Margaret's possession; and to effect that object, and as no strangers were permitted to visit Margaret, Dobbins placed himself at a window, which looks from the gallery of the Court of Sessions diagonally to the window of the room where Margaret O'Connor was confined. A piece of string was then fastened to this false key by Dobbins, who threw it into the window, a distance of several feet, and thus it came into Margaret's possession. She had it several days before a favorable opportunity offered to use it, and when it did come she made the best use of her time, opened the door, and thus made her escape to the street.

Margaret very coolly walked to the house of Dobbins, in Essex street, and there remained secreted for about three weeks. A reward of \$50 was offered by the keeper of the city prison for her arrest, but her hiding-place defied the ferret eyes of the police. All this time, Margaret with her fascinating ways, caused the man Dobbins to believe that he was to be paid the \$100 she had promised; but, either from want of means or inclination—we know not which—the damsel omitted to give him the price of her escape.

One day, in the latter part of July, Margaret caused her luggage to be conveyed to a schooner bound for Charleston, S. C., lying at the foot of Catharine street. Mr. Dobbins now became very uneasy, and was fearful of losing not only Margaret but the \$100. He therefore watched the lady's luggage and soon discovered that it was again removed from the Charleston schooner to a Liverpool packet. Dobbins was now clearly convinced that Margaret did not intend to pay him; and knowing that a reward of \$50 had been offered by the keeper of the city prison for Margaret's arrest, he took occasion to call upon Mrs. Foster, the matron of the prison, under

whose charge more especially, Margaret had been kept.

"Will the \$50 reward be paid," he asked, "if Margaret O'Connor is arrested?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Foster, eager at the news—"you shall have \$100 if you find her."

"Then," remarked Dobbins, "come or send some one with me, and I will show where Margaret is to be found."

Accordingly, two of the deputy keepers accompanied Dobbins to the Liverpool packet ship, discovered Margaret snugly ensconced in one of the cabins, took her into custody, and carried her back to the Tombs, where she was confined in a cell, and all her former privileges cut off.

It was said that she had engaged her passage to Liverpool; but the author doubts if she ever meant to embark for that place. So long as there remained a hope that she could effect anything for Bristol Bill, she would not have left the country; but would rather have solicited the aid of skillful crossmen, and, in disguise, visited the vicinity of the Vermont State Prison, in order to concoct schemes for Bill's escape.

At the time of our present writing Margaret remains securely confined in the Tombs, being held as a witness in the case of Drury, who is waiting trial on the charge of forgery.

CHAPTER XXX.

DOINGS OF THE DRURY GANG—PLOTS AND COUNTER-PLOTS—THOMPSON ARRESTED A SECOND TIME ON THE TORPEDO CHARGE.

Bristol Bill remains in the State Prison of Vermont; and in the meantime we keep watch of the doings of the Drury gang, in New York city—that association of felons with which Bill has been so long and intimately connected.

The Drurys, panting for revenge, endeavored to fasten upon Thompson the guilt of attempted murder. There has been so much of perjury in the Drury trials, that no one may readily believe the sworn testimony of any party. About the middle of September, 1850, One-Eyed Thompson was again arrested on the torpedo charge, and the reason thereof was the filing of the following affidavit by Samuel Drury, Jr. We give it as a curiosity in the records of crime:—

AFFIDAVIT.

"*City and County of New York, ss.*—Samuel Drury, Jr., being duly sworn, says that he resides at Astoria, Long Island; that, owing to a difficulty or misunderstanding between deponent and his father, Samuel Drury, deponent left his father's residence at Astoria about the middle of November, 1848, and did not return there to until the fifth day of May, 1849. And deponent further says that, during that period, he held no communication with his father, and saw him but once, and then only for a moment; that, after leaving his father's house, deponent came to New York, where he remained about four days, and then left for the western part of the State of New York, in company with one John Ash, for the purpose of selling perfumery and receiving orders therefor; that at the railroad station at Schenectady, W. H. Thompson accosted deponent, and asked him what brought him there and where he was going; said Thompson then got in the cars and went on to near Buffalo, and the next time deponent saw said Thompson, was at Buffalo, when said Thompson called to see deponent; said Thompson then inquired what deponent's business was; and on being shown his samples, he told deponent that he, Thompson, was a regular chemist, and could make the best hair-dye and hair oil in the country, and told deponent that if he had any sale for

OF BRISTOL BILL.

any, to send to him for some of his best; that deponent, on receiving orders for the article, did write to said Thompson for fifty bottles, but did not receive any; that said Thompson further told deponent to call and see him as soon as he returned to New York, and he would put deponent in a way of making more money than he ever could on the farm at Astoria; that Thompson at this time ascertained from deponent that he was on unfriendly terms with his father, and did not intend to return to his father's house, and said Thompson advised him not to return; that deponent, in company with said Ash, returned to the city of New York about the end of February, 1849, and in accordance with the request of said Thompson, deponent called at the house of said Thompson, but he was absent, and deponent did not see him until about the middle of March, when deponent, in company with said Ash, called again at the house of said Thompson, and deponent then saw him for the first time since his return to the city; deponent subsequently visited said Thompson frequently on the subject of the perfumery business, and said Thompson, on these occasions, told deponent he would be a fool to return to his father, as he (Thompson) could put deponent in a way of making money in the city of New York—that he would get deponent a good place. Deponent further says, that, on the second day of May, 1849, said Thompson came to the store of Thomas Bell, Esq., No. 11 Spruce street, New York, where deponent was engaged as a clerk, and told deponent that he, Thompson, wanted to see him at his (Thompson's) house on the succeeding day, (May 3, 1849,) at one o'clock, on important business concerning deponent and his father; and further told deponent to be sure to come; that on the 3d day of May, in accordance with said request deponent went to the house of Thompson, and arrived there about half-past one o'clock,

when Thompson met deponent, and censured him for not being more punctual;—he then requested deponent to go up stairs—that he, Thompson, was busy, and would come up in a few minutes; that deponent went up-stairs to the work-room of said Thompson; in the house 251 Division street, city of New York; that in the centre of said room was a stout bench or table, upon which was screwed down a printing press; that on the same bench or table were some tools—a saw, chisel, hammer, and some pieces of mahogany or red wood, three or four about a foot long, and some red shavings on the floor; that said pieces of wood appeared to form the sides of a box; after deponent had been in the room about fifteen minutes, Thompson came up, followed by his uncle Mount, who had a chisel in his hand; Thompson then said to deponent that he had to go to Warner's to get some money; that he was in a hurry, and wanted deponent to come up again at eight o'clock the same evening; at about half-past eight on the evening of the said 3d of May, deponent again went to the house of Thompson, when Thompson met him on the stoop, and complained of deponent being late, and took deponent at once in the said work room, at the top of the house; that on said bench, or table, was a parcel covered with a newspaper, tied up with twine; Thompson then told deponent that he had been to Warner, and had a regular muss with him; that he was going to take those counterfeit medicines (pointing to said parcel) to Warner's, and then he was going to have nothing more to do with the damned scoundrel; Thompson then said, "Sam, I wish you would write Mr. Warner's direction on this piece of paper, my hands are all sticky and gluey;" his hands were bound up; deponent asked him what he should write; Thompson said 'Thomas Warner, Esq., No. 18 City Hall Place,' at the same time telling deponent to write it plain; deponent wrote

Thompson requested ; Thompson then said (pointing to the left hand corner of the paper) put 'confidential'—remarking at the same time that there was a great deal in that little word, to any one that was inquisitive, and said something about women and their curiosity ; when deponent had done that, Thompson took a brush from a gum arabic bottle, and pasted the paper on the parcel ; Thompson then put on his cap and cloak, and took the parcel under his cloak, under his arm, and said, "Come along, Sam, we can talk going down ;" Thompson and deponent then left, and turned down East Broadway to corner of Chatham street ; deponent was then turning off, saying, 'Good bye, Thompson, this is my way home ;' Thompson then said, 'Come along as far as Warner's ; the walk won't do you any harm ;' and when in City Hall Place, a little way from Warner's house, Thompson said, 'Sam, I wish you would take this to Warner's, Warner is not at home, he is gone to Philadelphia ;' deponent took the parcel from Thompson, and had gone on four or five paces, when Thompson said, 'Hold on ; here, put my cloak on, so if Mr. Warner's son comes to the door he will not know you, for if he knew you he would tell his father, and then Warner would raise hell again, as he would think I had told you all about his and Moffatt's schemes ;' deponent then put the parcel on the sidewalk, and while Thompson was putting the cloak on deponent, a man passed, and had to go off the sidewalk to pass ; Thompson then put the cloak tight around deponent's neck, pulled deponent's hat down, and said, 'Mr. Warner's son won't know you now if he comes to the door ;' Thompson then said, 'Why, Sam, you look pale,' at the same time rubbing his hands down deponent's face, and said, 'When you get to Warner's, ring the bell, and if the girl comes to the door, tell her to give that to Master Warner, as Mr. Warner is not at home ;'

deponent rung the bell, a girl came to the door, to whom deponent gave the parcel, telling her, at the same time, to give it to Master Warner ; deponent then came back, and met Thompson about where he had left him ; Thompson looked at deponent and laughed, and said, 'Sam you are as black as a nigger ;' which was the first knowledge deponent had that Thompson blacked his face ; deponent asked him what he had been doing ; he said, 'You get to my house ;' he walked with deponent to corner of Division street and Bowery. when he parted from deponent, and met him again at his (Thompson's) house, as soon as deponent got there ; deponent further says, that he was entirely ignorant of the contents of said box, except what Thompson stated relating to its containing counterfeit medicines of Moffat's ; that on the succeeding Saturday morning, May 5, after the sale of Mr. Bell's store, Mr. Bell read to deponent the account in the Herald, of the explosion at Warner's house ; and the circumstances agreeing with those on which deponent had left the parcel for Thompson at Warner's house, deponent got frightened, and then returned to the house of his father, for the first time since he had left it in the preceding November. S. DRURY, JR."

The charge also included Thomas Warner, but he was nowhere to be found. At the calling of the elder Drury for a second trial, Warner, who was the principal witness, was discovered to have secretly escaped, and he has never since been heard of. The complaint against Warner and Thompson was lodged before Justice Mountfort. The affidavits of Mrs. Warner and her daughter, Mrs. Coleman, her son, George Warner, and those of Samuel Drury and Samuel Drury, Jr., with various others, were drawn up with great care and astonishing length by Justice Mountfort, and submitted to the Grand Jury for their action in the premises. It is said

that the Grand Inquest made a thorough investigation of this matter, and that they heard all the witnesses whose testimony could in the slightest degree tend to throw additional light upon the case. After a most laborious investigation, which lasted for nearly five days, the Grand Jury came to the conclusion that there was not the slightest evidence to implicate Thompson and Warner in the crime, and it was not deemed necessary to put them on their defence. Samuel Drury, Jr., was the only person, therefore, who remained under indictment for the torpedo business.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MORE REVELATIONS—DIABOLICAL CONSPIRACIES—CRIMINAL EPISODES IN THE LIVES OF DRURY, ASHLEY, &c.

Extracts from a voluminous affidavit, sworn to by M. C. Stanley, and prepared in June, 1850, for the Court of Sessions in New York city, will reveal to the reader some thrilling revelations of crime.

It had become necessary for Stanley, in consequence of a long series of malevolent attacks against his actions and character made by the Drury gang, to appeal to the Court in the shape of an affidavit, in order to rebut certain charges, and deprive the devisers of them of any triumph in his injury, which they might otherwise obtain by his silence. Stanley had been charged with receiving stolen goods, but was generally believed to be innocent. He was, however, imprisoned in the Tombs for two days, the 8th and 9th of January, 1850. From this imprisonment, (Stanley says,) proceeds the matter which enables him to expose the villanies of those who maligned him. We quote from his affidavit as follows:—

“At this time, Samuel Drury and his son were in the same prison, on the torpedo and other charges; James Arlington Ben-

net was also there on the charge of forgery; and Joseph C. Ashley, their confederate, who was out on bail, (Drury being his bondsman,) was in the habit of visiting the prison. The arrest of Drury and Bennet had been made some time previously, through the agency of Mr. Wilkes, the editor of the *National Police Gazette*, who at times employed me in matters of police business and police reports. In the matters relating to the torpedo, and to the arrest of Drury and others in that connection, he, however, had never given me any employment, or made me any communication, and during the whole period he occupied in producing these developments, I was entirely ignorant of his operations. Drury, it would appear, became aware of this state of things after his arrest, and supposing, probably, that I might feel chagrined at Mr. Wilkes, for the apparent want of confidence he had shown towards me in the matter, ventured to speak to me in a pleasant manner during his police examination. This fact was reported to Mr. McKeon, who communicated it to Mr. Wilkes, and Mr. Wilkes in return required me to explain the circumstance. I did explain it, but he did not altogether receive it, or, at any rate, did not seem to be satisfied that a person commonly supposed to be in his employ, should compromise his position by an apparent intercourse with a person who been arrested through his action. When I was released from prison after my two days' confinement, I went at once to Mr. Wilkes to thank him for his aid in my discharge, and to offer to undertake anything in reason to convince him that I was blameless in my intercourse with Drury. Thereupon it was agreed I should go back into prison that night, conceal the fact of my release, and ingratiate with Drury as a fellow-prisoner, in order to obtain from him the scheme of his defence. To accomplish this object, it was necessary I should denounce Mr. Wilkes for having abandoned

me; threaten McKeon for his persecutions, and assume to be as bad a man as Drury himself.

I followed out these views, and Drury at once on hearing my bitter invectives against Mr. McKeon, grasped my hand and pledged me his co-operation for revenge. "You," said he, wringing me hard and looking me steadily in the eye, "are the only man that can help me in this business. There are plenty who are willing, but they have no brains, no courage. With you, however, I can get revenge on McKeon, for I know you hate him and can overthrow them all."

He then developed the theory of his defence; a thing which he said he had not yet done to his counsel, and gave as his reason for his reserve, the fact that he had been expecting to get out upon bail. His plan was to show that all the proceedings taken against him were the result of a conspiracy on the part of One-eyed Thompson, and officers A. M. C. Smith and Jenkins, and that Mr. Wilkes had been duped. For this purpose he was to have a forged letter over Thompson's signature, demanding \$5,000 on the threat that he otherwise would explode a plot on him; and another forged letter, over the signatures of Smith and Jenkins, in the hand-writing of the 'atter, demanding \$2,000 to purchase their silence in the case. The man who was to perpetrate the forgeries, Drury represented to be a prisoner named Biggs. * * *

I then told him that I had heard he intended to prove an *alibi* in favor of the boy, to the effect that he was in St. Louis when the box was taken to Warner's house. "Oh!" said he, "I have abandoned that — there is no use in it; it is too difficult, for Sam did take the Box, and they will find out that he slept at 22 Bowery the night he took it?" After Drury had con-

considerably upon the feasibility of of defence, he burst out suddenly exclamation, "but there is one

thing dearer than all the rest; we must fix that villain, McKeon. I know where he can be caught asleep, and I have a man who will fix a shell which can be thrown into his window, and sweep him to hell at a blow. The man I mean can do anything of that sort — will do anything I want him to do, but he wants a mind — a mind to direct him. You are just the man to direct him, and if you succeed in serving me in this, my life and fortune is at your disposal." Here we parted, and I communicated to Drury the fact that I was about to be bailed, but that I would come in and see him on the following morning. * * *

On returning to the prison at six o'clock, Drury was laboring under much excitement, and the conversation was desultory. He referred again to the destruction of Mr. McKeon, and suggested a burglary upon his house with nippers, and the placing of a slow torpedo under his bed. * * *

Drury's confidence in me was now complete and, in referring to Ashley, he remarked, "If I were out, I would turn up that whole Proctor business; he murdered Proctor. He poisoned him in his drink, and he died before he could get up stairs." After some further talk he remarked, "I know all about the business;" then, turning suddenly upon me, he brushed his locks back from his temples, and said, "Do I look like a Spaniard?" The Court will bear in mind, in connection with this expression, that in 1841 or 1842, a person who called himself Roberto de la Vacca, appeared before a Commissioner of Deeds in Wall street, in company with a pretended Mr. Proctor, after the real Mr. Proctor was dead, and received from the latter, mortgage of two houses and lots in Collonade Row, on Brooklyn Heights, belonging to the estate of the dead Proctor, one of which was subsequently found in possession of Ashley on a subsequent mortgage made to him by Roberto de la Vacca. It would seem, therefore, by Drury's remark,

that he intended, I should understand, he had acted as Roberto de la Vacca. Drury further said that Ashley had poisoned a widow named Mrs. Puller, some years ago, to obtain her property and defraud her heirs. That he had ingratiated himself with her by his cant; that she fell sick under his hands; that he (Ashley) attended her bedside; that he changed the medicines the doctor left her by supplying bread for pills; flour water for white potatoes, and harmless red water for others. That at times as she wasted he would administer minute doses of arsenic to foam her stomach up and prevent nature from making a rally to restore itself. That her mind weakened under this treatment to the condition necessary for his directions in making her will, and finally she died. At this interview Drury further communicated that he intended to prove by a woman named Mrs. Felstead, that Warner had slept with her in Chambers street on the night of the torpedo, instead of being as he represented, in Philadelphia. He also said he intended to prove that Thompson, a man named Doves and Warner went to St. Louis some months previous to the explosion, and that while away, the torpedo was made among them to kill Warner's wife. 'But Drury,' said I, 'you have already told me that the box was made by Mount, Thompson's uncle, at a place in Divison street; how will you get over that?' 'Oh,' said Drury, '*all these things must be made to fit in time; every-thing cannot be done at once.*' At another interview with Drury he told me he had directed his outside emissary to follow Mr. McKeon, with the intention of procuring the torpedo papers as he had understood, that since the burglary on the District Attorney's office, Mr. McKeon carried his most important papers with him from his office, and brought them down again in the morning. He also said he had followed his directions on the premises Friday night, but

perceiving that other persons followed Mr. McKeon, and fearing they might be officers, he dropped away. Drury then requested me to ascertain where Mr. McKeon got shaved, in order that he might have the pocket of his overcoat picked of the papers when he hung it up. I communicated this to Mr. Wilkes, and he, after putting Mr. McKeon on his guard, as he said, gave me the information Drury wanted. 'I am determined to have those papers,' said Drury, 'if I am obliged to have Mr. McKeon's house 'nipped,' or have the next house entered, if his is too secure, and Mr. McKeon's reached by the scuttle or dormant window. * * * * *

On Monday, the 21st, Drury seemed to be very much depressed, and spoke as if he had abandoned the whole line of his defence. He had discovered the treachery of Biggs, and seemed to think he was involved passed redemption. He wanted very much to learn where Bristol Bill was, and requested me to enquire him out, but he did not explain his object. In his despondency, however, he did not suspect me, for in answer to an enquiry which I had been instructed to make, he informed me without hesitation, that — was the man who had committed the burglary in the District Attorney's office, and was the man who was to make the petard and take in charge the destruction of Mr. McKeon and others, should it become necessary. 'There is only one thing in the way of undertaking it at once,' said Drury, and this is his wife and children.' He does not like to do anything that will prejudice their situation, but if I will make arrangements to settle something on them in case he is 'done,' he will undertake it. Why, he used to be one of old Charley Garrett's gang, didn't you know that?' Drury in this alluded to a celebrated gang of burglars who had originally escaped from Botany Bay. This was the last interview I had with Drury, in which he seemed to extend to me his

confidence." This affidavit was signed by Marcus T. Stanley. The truth or falsity of its statements must be left to the judgment of the reader.

CHAPTER XXXCI.

MARGARET O'CONNOR'S LAST AFFIDAVIT— FURTHER EXPOSE OF THE TORPEDO AFFAIR.

About the middle of November, 1850, was published, in New York, an affidavit of Margaret, O'Connor, which created considerable interest in certain circles whose members were interested in the Drury affair. We give the affidavit in whole:—

"City and County of New York, ss.

"Margaret O'Connor, being duly sworn, deposes and says, that she is a single woman, and has for four years last past chiefly resided in the city of New York. Deponent further says, that for a short time she lived with William Darlington, alias Bristol Bill, and about the month of December, 1848, was by him introduced to William H. Thompson, alias One Eyed Thompson, in the City Prison, in this city, where deponent had gone to see Darlington, who was confined there on charge of burglary. Darlington introduced Thompson to me by the name of Doctor Thompson. After Darlington's trial and acquittal, deponent lived with him in a house in Essex street, in this city, until the first of April, 1849, when deponent went to the city of Boston to reside with Darlington, who had gone there about one month previously, and had written to deponent to come there. In the month of June, 1849, Thompson came to Boston and made frequent visits to the house No. 7 Lancaster street, where Darlington and myself resided. Thompson very frequently visited Darlington when we lived in the house in Essex street, in this city. Darlington and myself there passed

by the name of Eddy. When Thompson visited us in Boston, the subject of the torpedo box that had been sent to the house of Mrs. Warner, No. 18 City Hall Place, New York, was frequently the subject of conversation between Darlington, Thompson and myself. It was well understood between us all, that the torpedo box was made and sent by Thompson, and he said that he regretted that he had not put more powder in it, and that it had not its purpose. He often spoke of the construction of the box, and never pretended to deny his agency in the matter; he seemed to be proud of it, and said that Mr. Warner was bound to stick by him. Deponent understood, perfectly well, that the box had been made by Thompson, by the procurement of Warner, to destroy the life of Warner's wife. Thompson avowed to me the plan of charging the crime upon "Old Drury," for the purpose of clearing Warner's character; he said that he was "bound to stick by Warner, and Warner was bound to stick by him, and that they would sink or swim together." Thompson said that the strongest hold he had on Drury was, that he had made a tool of his boy. Thompson told me that it was well understood between him and Warner that the crime should be charged upon "Old Drury," and deponent says that it was well understood by Darlington, myself, and Thompson, that "Old Drury," was perfectly innocent of it. On the 28th July, 1849, I was arrested in Boston, for passing counterfeit money on the Eagle Bank, of Bristol, Rhode Island. Deponent was tried in the month of August following, and was found guilty by the jury; on the last day of my trial, Thompson came to me in court, and proposed to me that if deponent would swear that Drury had made the box and sent it to Warner's house for the purpose of killing him, (Warner,) deponent should get her liberty. Thompson had not any opportunity to say much more to me at that time, as the officers were be-

side me. Thompson said that Warner and Wilkes would go up to the Governor of the State of New York, at Albany, and induce him to write to the authorities of the State of Massachusetts, to send deponent to New York, that she might be used as the principal witness against Drury, upon the charge of sending the torpedo box to Warner's house. Deponent consented to do it, on condition that she should have her liberty. After the trial had terminated on my conviction, Thompson wrote letters to deponent, and gave sketches of what she was to swear to, and instructed me to read them over often, having first copied them in my own handwriting so that I should not forget. He also instructed me in his letters to destroy them as soon as I had read them, which I did, as directed. The plan was to charge the crime upon Drury to clear Warner. Thompson told deponent that she would get twenty year's imprisonment in the State prison, if she did not adopt the plan he proposed. Darlington urged me to accede to Thompson's proposition; and I did so. There was a statement of what deponent was to swear against Drury drawn up by Thompson, and copied by me, and re-copied by deponent's lawyer in Boston, and it was then signed by deponent in the presence of Marshal Tukey and officer A. M. C. Smith, of New York, who had come on from New York for that purpose. Deponent said the statement was true, and that she would swear to it in New York. Afterwards, towards the end of September, Warner came from New York to me, and he gave me a pledge for himself and Mr. Wilkes, that deponent should have her liberty if she would swear to said statement. He came twice to see me while I was in prison. Thompson had told me that it was all arranged between himself, Warner, and Wilkes, and that it was well known to them that said statement was false. Thompson described Warner to me, so that I could know him when he came to

the prison. Warner afterwards came on to cause deponent to be bailed out of prison, and after she was bailed, took her in a carriage to the Revere House, where Warner introduced Thompson to deponent, as though Thompson was a stranger to her. Deponent had been previously prepared for this by Bristol Bill; and as deponent was at the bottom of the steps of the Revere House, Warner said to me, "Now I want you to understand that you never saw Thompson before, and I am going to introduce him to you as though he were a stranger." When we had entered the Revere House, the ceremony of introduction of Thompson by Warner took place. The plan was, to make it appear that deponent had never seen Thompson before, and deponent was to swear that she had never seen Thompson before. Deponent, Thompson and Warner dined together in a private room, in the Revere House, and all three left for New York in company that afternoon. On our arrival at New York, the next morning, we all three got into a carriage, and went to the house of A. M. C. Smith, where Thompson and deponent went in, and Warner remained in the carriage. Officer Smith had not arisen at the time, and Thompson went up and woke him, while deponent went in the basement; Smith came down stairs with Thompson, and spoke to deponent, and told deponent to remain a little while after Thompson left the house, and then she would leave and meet Thompson at the corner of Grand street and the Bowery. Thompson left the house first, and deponent followed him as Smith directed; Smith told me that Thompson would take me where Bristol Bill was. As deponent was approaching Thompson, who was at the corner of Grand street and the Bowery, Thompson motioned to me to keep along on the same side of the street where I then was, Thompson being on the other side. We kept on until we arrived at the Grand street ferry, where we went

on board of the ferry boat ; and on our arrival on the Brooklyn side deponent followed Thompson to the Fulton Ferry, near which he took deponent into a porter house and introduced her to the proprietor as his wife. Thompson then got a carriage, and and took me to a place called Bedford, where he dismissed the carriage ; and then took me through a wood about two miles or more, to a place called Carrsville, where he took me to a house occupied by his mother-in-law, and where deponent found Bristol Bill, who was expecting me. After remaining there about a week, deponent, by direction of Thompson, came to the house of George Wilkes, in White street, New York, where she met Thompson, and where Thompson, Wilkes, and deponent had an interview of about half an hour ; Wilkes impressed upon deponent's mind the necessity of clearing Warner, and pledged himself that if deponent would swear to the statement she had made in Boston, that he would get deponent out of all difficulty, and said he had the power to do it ; he (Wilkes) told deponent that he had been the means of sending a great many to the State Prison, and that he could serve deponent if she would swear to that statement against Drury ; deponent understood, from his conversation, that he would get her into the State prison too if she refused to swear to the statement ; he told me to place myself entirely in the hands of Thompson, and act as he directed, deponent gave Wilkes to understand, in indirect terms, that the statement against Drury was false ; and deponent has no doubt that Mr. Wilkes knew perfectly well that it was false, and that he (Wilkes) was a party to the whole contrivance ; deponent was at Wilkes' house several times—she thinks as often as five or six ; upon some of those occasions Thompson was not present, but Wilkes was there ; deponent had several interviews with the District Attorney, at his office ; but prior to going there, she,

on every occasion, first went to the house of Wilkes, by direction of Thompson where Wilkes made me repeat the statements I had made against Drury, and he impressed upon my mind the necessity of remembering it exactly, and to be cautious and not let my statements, on different occasions, conflict with each other. While at the house of Wilkes, Thompson, in the presence of Wilkes, made suggestions of additional false statements respecting Drury, which he wished me to swear to ; and Wilkes always impressed upon me the necessity of my following Thompson's instructions and directions to the letter. Deponent remained at Carrsville, never leaving there, unless to go to the house of Wilkes, and from thence to the office of the District Attorney, for about three weeks, except on one occasion, when I went first to the house of Wilkes, and thence to the office of the District Attorney ; and from thence, by request of the District Attorney, to the police court, in Centre street, where deponent made a statement of what she would swear against Drury, relative to the torpedo box sent to the house of Warner. That statement was written down by Stuart, Clerk of Police, and, so far as it indicated Drury in the matter of sending the torpedo box, it was entirely false and untrue. Deponent had left Carrsville about three days previous, and had gone to Brooklyn to reside. The day following that on which deponent made her statement at the Police Court, as above stated, she went to Vermont, by directions of Thompson who supplied her with twenty-eight dollars to pay her travelling expenses ; he told me ' Bristol Bill ' was there, and gave me directions where to find him. Thompson said he would be there himself in about a week. After deponent had been in Vermont above one month, Bristol Bill was arrested there, and deponent went to Manchester, New Hampshire, where Warner and Marcus C. Stanley arrested me, and

brought me to New York; on my way here, both Warner and Stanley impressed upon me the necessity of my swearing to the statement respecting Drury, relative to the torpedo box, and promised me that if I should do so, I should be released the moment I left the witness stand; on our arrival in New York, we were met at the railroad car by Wilkes and officer A. M. C. Smith, who conducted me to the prison in Centre street. Deponent further says, that she was persuaded, and induced to make the false statement implicating Mr. Drury in the charge of sending the torpedo box to the house of Mr. Warner, by means of the promises made to her by Warner, Thompson and Wilkes, that by so doing she should be liberated from imprisonment, and that it was by such means that she became a party to the conspiracy of Thompson, Warner and Wilkes, and others, to convict Mr. Drury of a crime of which she believes Thompson and Warner to be guilty.

MARGARET O'CONNOR."

How much truth or falsity there is in the foregoing affidavit we will not attempt to say.

The following is a copy of a letter addressed by the Grand Jury of New York city to Gov. Briggs:—

"NEW YORK, Oct. 16, 1850.

HIS EXCELLENCY GEORGE N. BRIGGS,
GOVERNOR ON THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS.

"SIR:—The Grand Jury for the city and county of New York, empanelled at the Court of General Sessions, for the present October term of that Court, beg leave to present before your Excellency and the Council of the State of Massachusetts, the case of Margaret O'Connor, whom we find in the prison in this city, where she is detained upon a commitment as a witness, upon charge preferred against certain parties, for having caused a torpedo box, or infernal machine, to be sent to the

house of Thomas Warner, in this city, in the month of May 1849, with the intent to destroy life.

The circumstances under which this woman appears have strongly commended her to our sympathy, and we recommend her to your Excellency as a fit subject for executive clemency.

It appears that Margaret was convicted at the Municipal Court of the city of Boston, in the month of August, A. D. 1849, for having in her possession counterfeit money, with the intent to utter; that after her conviction, and before sentence, she was procured to be bailed out of prison, in Boston, in order that she might be brought on to this city, and be made use of as a witness against one Samuel Drury, who stood charged with the offence of sending the torpedo box; that the application that she might be thus bailed was made by public officers of this State, who had been induced, by parties interested, to believe that Margaret could give material testimony relative to the criminal offence above mentioned.

The testimony against Drury, which Margaret was to give was false, and she was induced to promise to testify falsely by the persuasion of these parties and by the apprehension of a long term of imprisonment for the offence of which she had been convicted at Boston.

It was represented to her that she would be imprisoned twenty-five years, and that the only chance for her to escape from such imprisonment was to make the false statement upon and by means of which the parties interested in having the false statement made could procure her to be bailed.

She was bailed out of prison in Boston, in the sum of \$1,000, and brought on to this city, for the express purpose of committing this perjury, and upon the trial of Drury she was called as a witness in behalf of the people of this State.

When upon the stand as a witness, she

refused to commit the perjury, and disclosed the fraud which had been attempted to be perpetrated by means of her testimony.

After she came to this city, and before the trial of Drury, every conceivable effort was made to induce her to make the false statement. She was promised that strong influences should be brought to bear to induce the Executive of the State of Massachusetts to pardon her, in case Drury was convicted by means of her testimony; and the threat of her certain return to Massachusetts to be sentenced, and of the long imprisonment to which she was destined, was held out to her as the inevitable consequence of her refusal. But to her honor be it said, she resisted all the efforts made to induce her to commit the perjury, and resolved to meet the terrors of her long imprisonment rather than tell the falsehood.

The court and jury, upon the trial of Drury, were so impressed with the truth of her statement, that upon the suggestion of the jury, the trial was at once terminated by the acquittal of the prisoner.

In the discharge of our duty as Grand Jurors at the present term of the court, she has, at our request, appeared before us upon several occasions, and has made developments which have essentially aided the administration of public justice. We have carefully scrutinized her statements, and we have perfect confidence that she has told us the truth. Of this we are satisfied, as well by corroborating circumstances as by the intrinsic evidence afforded by her statements.

The parties who induced her to consent to commit the perjury are now determined upon her destruction, because she has refused, and design to have her surrendered in Boston in exoneration of her bail.

She is in very feeble health, and in the judgment of the physician, and the matron of our city prison, longer confinement would probably terminate her life

Under these circumstances, in view of the aid she has rendered in the administration of our criminal justice, in view of her stern and inflexible resistance to the efforts made to induce her to swear to a falsehood as the only means of ensuring her safety, and in view of her shattered health, we strongly recommend her as a fit and proper subject for executive clemency.

We are with great respect,

Your very ob't servants,

ELIAS G. DRAKL, Foreman.

[And signed by eighteen Grand Jurors.]

The following correspondence between high legal authorities in New York and Boston may not prove uninteresting in connection with the preceding documents:—

“NEW YORK, Nov. 7, 1849

“SAMUEL D. PARKER, ESQ:—

“Dear Sir:—There are measures on foot here, for the detection of the villain or villains who, some time ago, attempted the life of Thomas Warner, with what is ordinarily termed an “infernal machine.” I have been put in possession of an affidavit made by a woman named Margaret O'Connor, at Boston, in which it appears that she can testify to material matter. I understand that she is under arrest for being implicated in passing counterfeit money, and that the authorities of Massachusetts would give us facilities for obtaining her testimony; in short, that they would send her on here to testify, on a proper request. Will you have the goodness to inform me whether her attendance can be had in this city? We have a grand jury now in session, and could she be here, we might at once present the case before them. Unless she can be sent directly on, please communicate to me the state of the matter, and what steps will be requisite to obtain her attendance.

“Your early answer will oblige, very respectfully your obedient servant,

A. L. JORDAN,
Attorney General, N. Y.”

"NEW YORK, Nov. 20, 1849.

"DEAR SIR:—An indictment having been found this day, against Samuel Drury for counterfeiting, and another against himself and his son for an attempt to murder Thomas Warner, Esq; the undersigned (the first as District Attorney of this city, and the second as the substitute for the Attorney General in the prosecution of the indictments) take the liberty of addressing you upon a subject intimately connected in their judgment, with the ends of justice.

We are informed that a person named Margaret O'Connor has been convicted, in your city, of passing some of the bills, for the counterfeiting of which or of similar ones, Drury was indicted. An examination of the case has satisfied us that the testimony of this woman is very material upon the trial of both the indictments, and the object of this communication is to invite your consideration of the question whether she cannot be immediately placed within the reach of the officers of justice here, for this purpose, consistently with the demands of justice upon her in your city. If you can see no objection to this course, we can only again assure you that it is our firm belief that the course of justice will be greatly promoted by her presence here without delay.

Mr. Warner, who is probably in Boston, or will be so before this reaches you, can explain to you fully, the points materially important in the testimony of the woman.

Very respectfully, your ob't servants,

JOHN McKEON, Dist. Att'y.

DAVID GRAHAM.

HON. S. D. PARKER, Boston."

"NEW YORK, Feb. 16, 1850

HON. SAMUEL D. PARKER:

SIR:—Having understood that it is your intention to forfeit the recognizance in the case of Margaret O'Connor, we deem it our duty to inform you of her relations to the case of Drury; and the reason why she was not examined as a witness on this trial.

This we do as a matter of justice, no less to you than ourselves; because it was no doubt, on our assurance that the purposes of justice required her presence here, that you assented to her being admitted to bail.

When she arrived here, she communicated to us very important facts bearing upon the case of Drury, of the truth of which we were satisfied, both from her manner of telling them and from strong corroborating facts. On an application, she was provided, by order of the Court, with suitable lodgings, where she remained until just before the commencement of the trial; and it was not until the morning on which it was commenced, that we were informed of her disappearance. Up to that time every thing had been done on the part of the prosecution to secure her attendance, and, as we supposed, effectually done. Of the good faith in this respect of every one connected with the prosecution, we are entirely satisfied. We have reason to believe that she is somewhere in this city, or its neighborhood, and that her attendance upon the next trial, in April, can be secured;—and deeming her testimony of great importance, we should regret that any step should be taken which would deprive us of its benefit. You will, of course, be guided in your action on the subject, by your own sense of duty you owe the State you represent; but we would at the same time respectfully suggest that a delay sufficiently long to enable us to find her, and secure her testimony, may be very conducive to the ends of justice here, and not prejudicial to those which you are seeking to attain. Should our efforts in this respect fail, we will inform you at the earliest possible day so that you can then pursue such course as you may think necessary.

With great respect, very truly yours,

JOHN McKEON, District Attorney.

DAVID GRAHAM.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A RETROSPECTIVE CHAPTER IN THE LIFE OF BRISTOL BILL — HIS ATTEMPT TO LEAD AN HONEST LIFE — AN ATTEMPTED ROBBERY AND ESCAPE FROM JAIL, NOT HITHERTO MENTIONED — BRISTOL BILL'S PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

The reader has seen, at some length, in a review of the Drury and Thompson cases, the unparalleled rascality of the great and accomplished gang of law-breakers with which Bristol Bill, previous to his arrest in Vermont, had some years been connected. How many of these villians are to be brought to justice remains to be seen.

In drawing our narrative to a close, we would not neglect to mention a few incidents in the career of Bristol Bill which the author in the course of his work has hitherto overlooked. Among the most interesting, perhaps, are Bill's attempts to reform.

Whether it was because he had become too well known to the police to thrive well in his burglarious profession, or whether Bill actually felt some compunctions of conscience, and thought he should be a happier man if an honest one, we cannot say; but true it is, that some two or three years since, in New York city, when by no means reduced to poverty, Bill made up his mind to forsake his criminal career, and earn his bread by the honest labor of his hands. In accordance with this creditable intent, he sought for employment, and soon engaged himself to the proprietor of a large machine manufactory—his mechanical knowledge and skill best fitting him for the business which he succeeded in obtaining. But there was no rest for him—he could do nothing to which an evil motive would not be attributed by the harpies of the law, who watched his whereabouts. Conceiving that this was merely a scheme to further some villanous design, the police informed the manufacturer as to the character of his newly-hired workman, and

Bill was of course forthwith discharged. Discouraged at this attempt to lead a correct life, Bill returned to his old habits. We, however, at another period, find him at a small country town in Connecticut, under a new name, very civil and quiet in his deportment, and, though little known, respected by his neighbors. He is owner of a saw-mill, and day after day he may be found, in his shirt-sleeves, toiling like any honest, hard-working man. Sawing logs keeps him busy and happy—he feels like a new man—and he whistles gaily 'mid the hum and buzz of his daily labor. Weeks and months fly on, and Bill has become quite used to his occupation, and scarcely thinks of past dangers or future crimes. But again the blood-hounds are on his track. The chief-of-police in New York learns accidentally that Bristol Bill is in a certain town in Connecticut. A policeman is instantly despatched to the scene—he at once recognizes his victim—he cannot arrest him, but the public are made aware of whom they have been entertaining in their midst. Poor Bill! the world will not now let you be honest if you would. There is no alternative but a return to crime. Bill is broken up in his business—leaves the town, and once more mingles with his old pals in the great cities. So much for the vigilance and justice of the officers of the law.

It appears that among other adventures, the particulars of which we have not been able to obtain, Bristol Bill, some year or two since, attempted the robbery of the Bank at Georgetown, Mass. He had completed all his preparations for the undertaking, and was about to commence upon the final act. But it chanced that the affair was discovered, and Bill was obliged to fly. In the spring of 1850, however he made another attempt, aided by two or three comrades. They had nearly obtained entrance to the Bank, when they were set upon by the authorities, who had mysteri-

ously obtained an inkling of the matter. Bill and one of his pals were arrested. They were examined, and held for trial—being lodged, in the meantime, in the Essex county jail. The authorities little dreamed that they had in custody the notorious burglar who was known by the name of Bill Darlington, or they might have taken unusual pains to keep him secure. But one fine morning, the jailer found that his birds had flown. The gratings of the window in Bill's cell had been wrenched from their sockets, and left an aperture through which the turn-key gazed in dismay. Nothing more was heard of the Georgetown Bank robbers.

There has always been considerable mystery concerning Bill's long rendezvous in Boston; but it may be partly explained, from the fact that he had always efficient aids and coadjutors in this vicinity, ready to help him in any emergency. In the way of "fences," (or persons who received stolen goods, or exchanged stolen money,) he had individuals of high reputation to lean upon. It is a startling fact, though nevertheless true, that the cashier of a Boston Bank stood ever ready to exchange with any funds brought to him by Bristol Bill whose character he was well acquainted. The cashier felt perfectly safe—he received a generous percentage, and the stolen money was soon irredeemably lost sight of in the vortex of banking operations. Besides this gentleman, Bill had the services of a noted broker on State street, who was seldom prone to ask questions, when he saw an opportunity of making money.

As an instance of Bill's generosity, the author would relate the following incident, which he obtains on the best authority. There was a counting-room in the vicinity of State street, where Bill well knew that

ite a sum of money was left every night. He found a plan to effect an entrance; and with this view, he proceeded to fit a key to the outside door. After several attempts,

the key was completed, and the burglar waited for a certain night to accomplish the robbery. It so happened, however, that in the meantime, the merchant failed to a large amount, and it was reported in the newspapers of the day that he was suddenly become a beggar. It had such an effect upon the mind of Bill, that he abandoned the contemplated robbery, although he knew that he would have been well paid for his pains, had he attempted it.

We have proceeded nearly to the completion of our work without giving any description of the personal appearance of the subject of our sketch. The author will therefore speak of Bristol Bill as he saw him in the streets of Boston during the month of September, 1849. He was undoubtedly forty-six or forty-seven years of age, although the casual observer might have taken him to be much younger. His complexion was quite dark; his hair was nearly jet black, but somewhat thin on the top of his head, and very slightly sprinkled with grey. His eye was deep, black, keen and restless, and seemed to observe, at a single flash, everything that transpired around. His nose was short, though by no means a pug—the nostrils wide and distended. His forehead was exceedingly broad, but not remarkably high. His step was quick, and his personal appearance quite gentlemanly. We should judge him to be about five feet eight inches in height. His shoulders were broad, and his whole form denoted great strength and activity. The expression of his face was singularly changing. At one time it was beaming with amiability and pleasantry; at another, it was like the cloud that hides the thunder bolt. Determination was written in every lineament of his bronzed features, and gave portentous warning of the great passions that slumbered within his breast. But there were honorable impulses that guided many of Darlington's actions. He was never what might be called a "mean"

man. With those to whom he looked with gratitude, he was ever frank and generous. To those who treated him in a fair and manly manner, his heart and purse were always open. He was never a traitor to his friends. But for those who had deserted him in the hour of need,—who had proved recreant to their pledges and his friendship,—there was no vengeance too terrible. Retribution, though slow, was sure to be visited upon the head of the offender. Such was Bristol Bill—firm and true to his friends; terrible and revengeful to his enemies.

While confined in the jail at Danville, Vt., awaiting trial, it is said that he made some most astounding and almost incredible confessions of his criminal acts and doings, plots and designs, committed and meditated in the city of New York. But most of these, as circulated by rumor and in print, have been gross exaggerations, and not at all consonant with the character of the man.

At the time Bill was committed to the State Prison in Windsor, the overseer required him (as is the case with all convicts) to undress and bathe, before assuming the prison garb. On stripping himself, the by-standers observed upon his back the scars resulting from his severe whippings at Botany Bay. On being questioned in regard to them, Bill coolly and facetiously remarked—“Oh, they are only emblems of my honorable profession!”

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CHRISTIAN MEADOWS—HIS APPEARANCE AND CHARACTER—MARGARET O'CONNOR, AND OTHER PERSONS IN THE DRAMA.

As we advance to the latter pages of our narrative, it is fitting that we should again refer to the counterfeiter, Christian Meadows, who was Bristol Bill's associate in

crime, and is now the companion of his imprisonment. Christian Meadows is an Englishman by birth, and apparently thirty-two or thirty three years of age. He is a man full six feet in height, of strong muscular frame, and extremely erect in person. He has a light complexion—blue eyes—light brown hair—a large aquiline nose—a wide mouth, and thick lips. He is really a good looking man; his address is very courteous, and a stranger would hardly select him for a villain. He is evidently a man of considerable talent, and has earned a good degree of celebrity as an engraver. Great skill in his art very naturally led him, during periods of misfortune, into the crime of bank-note counterfeiting, and his success in that illegal occupation was remarkable. But he was finally detected, tried, convicted, and sentenced to a term of six years in the State Prison at Charlestown, Mass. Meadows seems to have been born for better deeds; but, under corrupt influences and vicious associations, he became an efficient and dangerous instrument in the hands of his more wily confederates. He is a man who would, probably, be far more easily influenced, than successful in influencing others—one who would readily become a useful tool in the hands of others. He has not that quick foresight and cunning sagacity which would enable him to plan and lay out a great and intricate work, but, when it was once pointed out, he would diligently and faithfully pursue the instructions of his superiors; hence, he was peculiarly fitted for successful operations in crime, when under the guidance, and profiting by the adroit experience of such a man as Bristol Bill. But both of these celebrated culprits are now in the confines of a State Prison; and talents, that would have brilliantly shone in the honest walks of life, are entirely lost to their possessors and the world. They certainly form a melancholy instance of perverted genius.

We will now return to another important personage, who has figured conspicuously in this great and mysterious drama of crime. We refer to Margaret O'Connor, the devoted consort of Bristol Bill.—We left her last in the Tombs, in New York city, where she had been detained for some months as a witness in the Drury cases.

During the second week in December, 1850, Margaret, having been surrendered by her bail in New York, was brought back into the custody of the authorities of Boston. A day or two after, she was carried before the Supreme Court, to receive sentence. It will be recollected that the original charge upon which she was convicted, was for passing four counterfeit bills of the Eagle Bank, Bristol, R. I., on the 24th of July, 1849, to several traders in Hanover and Washington streets, Boston. Her conviction on this indictment took place at the October term (in the same year) of the Municipal Court. The case was then filed up to the Supreme Court on exceptions by her counsel. About this period, she certified that she was in possession of facts which would convict Drury in New York. Her bail was accordingly reduced to \$1000, and in November, 1849, she went to New York with Thomas Warner and Bristol Bill. When called upon to testify, she made various contradictory statements, and partially acknowledged that she had humbugged the authorities of Boston. She was imprisoned in the Tombs, and contrived by her repeated stories to make the Attorney General of New York believe that she could yet be of service to the State in convicting One Eyed Thompson. She was consequently retained by the New York authorities until she escaped from prison—the particulars of which affair we have given in a preceding chapter.

Margaret was finally returned to the authorities of Massachusetts, and made her appearance in the Supreme Court for the

purpose above stated. She was splendidly attired in silk and satin—wore magnificent gold ear-drops and finger rings, and sported a costly gold watch and chain. She appeared as firm and unmoved as ever—but her form was thinner than usual, and her countenance bore the traces of long confinement and suffering, and of a mind ill at ease. She had nothing to say to the Court herself, but requested an officer to remind His Honor that she had already been a prisoner for nearly a year and a half. Judge Bigelow, in passing sentence, said he was aware of that fact, and also of many more which he thought over-balanced it. He remarked that she had made false statements to subserve her own ends, and had twice attempted to escape from custody. The Judge informed her that the long imprisonment of which she complained was her own fault. As a minister of justice he could not inflict a nominal fine. He then sentenced her to two years hard labor in the House of Correction at South Boston. Twenty years is the full penalty of the law. [At the time of our writing this, a petition for Margaret's pardon is being circulated, and is to be carried before the Governor and Council.] After her sentence, she was conveyed to her new quarters at the House of Correction, where the fair lady was obliged to exchange her rich dresses and finery, for the plain, clean, homespun garb of the prison house. Thus, for the present, ends the career of this remarkable personage. The author of this, with many others, has conversed with her in private, and we can bear witness that she is a woman of no ordinary genius and talent, and possesses considerable more information than the average of females. She has made a fitting companion for the indomitable and enterprising Darlington, and we shall not be surprised, at some future day, to learn of their reunion in some quarter outside of the pale of American laws and justice.

In drawing to a conclusion, we must not forget to mention the notorious Drurys in New York. The elder Sam, after being acquitted on the torpedo charge, now awaits a trial on the charge of counterfeiting. Thus far, Drury's money and exceeding cunning have worked wonders for him in the way of delaying and thwarting justice. There cannot be the slightest possible doubt of his guilt; but most of the witnesses against him are persons of vile character, and some of them perjurers;—thus there is a chance left for the old villain to escape the avenging hand of Justice.

Young Sam, also, has been attended with a degree of luck in avoiding punishment by the laws. His affidavit against One Eyed Thompson will be recollected, in which he charged the torpedo affair upon that individual, although acknowledging that he himself carried the box to Warner's house. It is a matter of speculation whether the young man was, or was not, a guilty participant in the transaction. But, however it may have been, it seems that Sam, after passing some months' ordeal in the courts of New York and Brooklyn, and having retired to his father's residence in Astoria, could not resist an inclination to prosecute some singular experiments of a torpedo nature. Accordingly, we find that in the fall of 1850, Sam, while experimenting in his garden, got seriously injured, and the young man's scientific researches were, for a period, put an end to. As a matter of curiosity, we will describe the machine he had prepared for explosion. He took the hub of an old wagon wheel, and in the iron cylinder which receives the axle he hammered a quantity of powder and a grist of slugs. In the largest end he rivetted and soldered an iron pound weight, and then the whole thing was imbedded in the earth. It was Sam's intention, of course, to have it burst; he therefore placed the small end of the hub downwards, and drilled a vent-hole through the side to receive the match.

A dignified New York editor, in recording the matter, said—"The object of the experiment was, doubtless, to test the lateral force of an explosion in the earth." Sam touched the match, but the torpedo failed to explode. After a short time, he approached to examine the cause of the delay in the discharge, and, under the impression that the match had ceased to burn, leaned over the missile at the very moment it exploded. The contents and fragments of the thing struck him in various parts of his person—the most serious wound was made in his throat, which was torn or cut in a most shocking manner. He was immediately removed to the house, and medical aid was summoned. The wound was very severe, but not necessarily fatal. Of his final recovery there is little doubt.

The two Drurys—father and son—are assuredly most singular characters. The elder one has been possessed of vast wealth, but we understand that the greater part of his resources have been spent within the space of two years, in avoiding and shielding himself from justice.

One Eyed Thompson has also, thus far escaped what would be considered his just deserts, and is now acting in the capacity of publisher and editor of a newspaper in Brooklyn, N. Y. He would have it appear that he intends now to lead an honest life, and we trust that the event will prove the appearance true.

Thus we have followed, to a considerable extent, the careers of several notorious individuals who have been more or less identified with the crimes of Bristol Bill. The chief actors in this great drama, it will be seen, have passed through a lengthy and severe ordeal of judicial investigation, and at least three of the great gang have received the merited reward of a long career.

CHAPTER XXXV.

BRISTOL BILL AND CHRISTIAN MEADOWS IN PRISON—THE BEHAVIOR OF EACH—THEIR OCCUPATION—BILL'S LAST ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE.

Advancing rapidly to the conclusion of our task, we locate in the State's Prison at Windsor, Vermont, the

"Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history."

Darlington and Meadows are each sentenced to ten years imprisonment for counterfeiting; and Bill will, no doubt, unless he clandestinely escapes, be subjected to additional confinement. The Grand Jury have found a bill against him, charging him with an assault with intent to kill Bliss N. Davis, the State's Attorney. This indictment will hang suspended over him till near the expiration of his present term, when, it is to be supposed, he will be tried, found guilty, and sentenced to another ten years.

During the first part of Bristol Bill's confinement in the State Prison he was the source of great trouble and considerable terror to the warden and keepers. Fearless desperation stamped his whole conduct, and for a time he seemed to have lost that cool cunning and other peculiar traits which had previously characterised him. He would struggle violently in his chains, and was abusive and threatening towards his keepers. Meadows, on the contrary, with chastened spirit, was quiet, and went cheerfully to work. But it was some time before Bill could be brought to any useful service. He was tied up to a post, and lashed, again and again—but it merely seemed like worrying a caged tiger, and produced no good effect. He was then kept in heavy chains and solitary confinement, where he had ample chance for quiet meditation. After some days, Bill had evidently regained his coolness and discre-

tion, and it was apparent that his violent conduct had been but a temporary paroxysm of rage induced by disappointed revenge and his almost hopeless fate. He signified his willingness to work, and was therefore sent into the machine shop, where he was taught to manufacture scythe snaths; but the keepers took the precaution, at the same time, to attach a heavy log to his leg to prevent his escape.

After this his demeanour was singularly quiet, and he was exceedingly civil to the officers of the prison. But the deep frown that ever rested on his brow, and the occasional flashing of his deep, dark eye, spoke too plainly an unmistakeable language;—it was apparent that his whole mind was absorbed with the thought of liberty, and was continually revolving plans of escape.

Bill had been confined some months in prison, before the keepers received any direct evidence of a fixed attempt to break out. They had always kept the most strict watch over him, and were exceedingly careful that no tool or instrument should come within his reach, that could be turned to an improper account. Unusual orders had been given for his safe keeping; for Bill's reputation had followed him even into the country villages of Vermont, and there were many who deemed it almost a matter of impossibility to keep long secure in prison walls so daring and skilful a burglar as the celebrated Bill Darlington.

One morning, after the prisoners had gone to the work-shops, the cells in which they staid over night were, as usual, carefully examined. One of the officers, in looking over Bill's cell, spied in an obscure corner some little whittlings, which very naturally excited curious suspicions, but for a long time nothing of a more suspicious nature was discovered. It could not be accounted for, how whittlings could be there, or how Bill could have in his possession any instrument to make them.—Finally, on a minute examination of the

oed, they found the large wooden model of key, and this, when tried, was found to fit the prison door lock. Here, certainly, was a remarkable proof of Bill's genius and invention. But it was never learned how or when he had accomplished the work. Bill was immediately shown the model, and questioned;—his rage knew no bounds, and he would answer no questions. Another fit of ugliness seemed to have seized him, and he was ordered to the whipping post. He was then flogged, according to the prison rules. No exhibition of suffering, however, did he vouchsafe to the eyes or ears of the hardened minions of the law; and when the lash paused in its inhuman work, he laughed scornfully in their faces. He was whipped again, and he bantered them.

"You d—d fools! have you got the silly idea that you can keep me here for ten years?" said Bill, with a derisive laugh, even while the blood coursed down his tattered back.

Another flogging, with about the same effect, and the officers desisted. Then came another period of solitary confinement, and after a while Bill again resumed his place in the machine shop.

One fact is worthy of mention, in reference to Bill's attempts to escape from the State Prison. The warden and other officers have sedulously strove to keep the truth of the matter from the public, for the reason, no doubt, that if it became generally known that Bristol Bill had any chance or facilities to escape, there are a plenty of his pals in various parts of the country, who would immediately hasten to Vermont, in readiness to afford any assistance in their power, and co-operate with him for his safety, in case he once cleared the prison walls. Therefore, when the reports have leaked out, of Bill's continued schemes to effect his freedom, the State officers have taken exceeding pains to deny their truth. They certainly fear that he will

yet work loose from their clutches, and stand in dread of any organized attempt on the part of skilful crossmen, who are unknown to them, to free their old comrade from his loathsome confines. It is a well known fact, both in Boston and New York that parties of two and three, from either city, have occasionally paid a visit to Windsor. Their purpose could be easily guessed. It is well known that Margaret O'Connor, while in New York, labored assiduously, in various ways, among the crackmen then in that city, to induce some of them to attempt Bill's release. How far she succeeded we cannot state; but there is little doubt that her persuasions were the cause of at least two notorious outlaw visiting Vermont. Whether or not they accomplished anything remains a mystery.

During the month of November, 1850 Bill made another attempt to leave the narrow boundaries in which the State confined him; and, forsooth, he came very near effecting his object. Of course but few facilities exist outside of the prison, for learning the precise manner in which Bill exercised his daring and ingenuity in this instance; but such brief information as we possess has been gathered from a high legal officer in Vermont.

The first that was discovered of this affair, was late one dark night. The guard was going his rounds near the outside wall, when he suddenly heard a strange clanking noise, and stopped to listen. For some time all was quiet, and his suspicions at length vanished. But the noise was repeated, and he rushed to the spot from whence the sound emanated. There he found a man who was attempting to clamber over the wall, but the fugitive was so trammelled with fetters, that every time he tried to gain a foothold he would fall back, and his chains would clank against the stones. The guard was armed, and calling for help, he seized his prisoner, who proved to be no less a personage than Bristol

or Bill. The unfortunate man was carried back, and placed in a new cell. Thus ended his last essay to break from prison. But here was a mystery for the keepers to unfold. Bill always took them unawares, and they found it next to impossible to discover where he obtained the means of leaving his cell.

An examination showed that such portions of his irons had been cut as to allow him the free use of his hands and a partial use of his legs; the locks of both the cell and outer doors had been either picked or opened by false keys; and the whole scheme of escape appeared so perfect, that they were more and more puzzled as they investigated it. Silence was the only answer given by Bill to their interrogatories, and when a flogging was threatened, he met them only with a scornful laugh.

A new cell was more tightly secured, and fresh obstacles were put in Bill's desired path. By day, while at his work, a watchful eye was ever upon him; and take it altogether, Bill seems thus far to have occasioned the keepers about as much vexation and trouble as all the rest of the unhappy convicts put together.

It may be a matter of serious speculation whether or not Bristol Bill, even if alive, will serve out the term for which he is imprisoned. A man of such indomitable energy—of such unexampled daring, rendered more vigorous by desperation—needs something more than common prison bars to keep him from the world. But, as much as we may admire the extraordinary talents and peerless bravery of Bristol Bill, we know that he but suffers the legal penalty of a series of crimes, and that it is for the good of the community that such a man should be kept aloof from his fellow beings.

CONCLUSION.

Look on him—through his dungeon grate,
Feebly and cold, the morning light
Comes stealing round him, dim and late,
As if it loathed the sight.
Reclining on his trawy bed,
His hand upholds his drooping head—
His bloodless cheek is hard and seared,
Unshorn his rough, neglected beard;
And o'er his bony fingers flow
His long, dishevelled locks * *.

There, in the cold confines of the Vermont State Prison, we leave the subject of our work—toiling, by day, under the eyes of vigilant keepers, and sleeping, by night, within the dreary walls of a loathsome cell, where even the pale and kindly moon is not suffered to shed her benignant rays, although it were possible for them to come scantily through the close iron bars that chequer the small aperture which might satirically be called a window. There, in the desolate midnight, on his hard couch, tosses the restless form of the great burglar; little sleep comes to his eyelids; he dreams—but his are waking dreams—of liberty; he reviews the long procession of the past;—away, far away into years gone by, gradually wander his thoughts and youth, with all its halo of innocence and pleasure, beams on his vivid memory. He cannot forget—ay! now her beauteous form flits before him—no, he cannot forget the first bride of his true but impulsive heart, the sweet but frail Mary Livingston. He endeavors to trace her desolate life upward. But, alas! many a long year has flown onward to oblivion, since the lips of William Darlington touched those of his first love. Can it be, that her fair form is mouldering in the grave; or, is it possible, that even now, grey-haired and forlorn, she sits pondering over the mysterious fate of her early beloved? And where are the two sweet babes who, years ago, were left fatherless? Is not all this a theme for the solitary meditation of the prisoner? Again, he pants for freedom. He indulges in the vain hope that freedom may yet unravel the mysteries connected with his career—tha-

he may once more walk among his fellow men, and go wheresoever he list. Perhaps the land of his birth he would again visit, and old associations, thronging thick within his heart, might bring to his eyes the tears of eternal repentance.

The prison in which Bill is confined, at Windsor, Vt., is built of stone; and of rather antique fashion. It is surrounded by a brick wall about thirteen feet high, and guarded on the top by a thick *chevaux-de-frize*, or close iron spikes. The persons who have been generally confined in this prison have been culprits not regularly versed in the scientific arts of crime, and therefore without the skill to perfect a successful attempt at escape. We recollect, however, of two prisoners, some years ago, who, having obtained egress from the main building, found their way over the wall by means of a board which they took from one of the workshops. But the prison has usually been looked upon, by the Vermonters, as a very secure fastness, and its barriers almost as insurmountable as the Old Bastile of Paris. Its security, nevertheless, remains to be proved, as the author imagines. Bars and bolts will never have been put to a stronger test than during the imprisonment of Bristol Bill.

During the month of December, 1850, our artist went to Vermont, and, obtaining the necessary permit, visited the interior of the State Prison. There were about ninety prisoners confined there at the time, and the guard was numerous and strong. In the machine shop he saw Bristol Bill, industriously engaged in making scythe snaths; he held his head down, and kept his eyes steadfastly on his work, although conscious that a stranger was standing near him; while he plied the spoke-shave with as much zeal and vigor as would any free and honest mechanic. In another department of the prison, was seen Christian Meadows: he was highly spoken of by

the warden for his uniformly quiet conduct. Meadows has grown thin in his confinement, and it is evident that he has become a repentant man. He has not the deep passions, or a particle of the desperation, of Bristol Bill; but calmly bides his fate, and perhaps looks forward, with something like reasonable hope, towards an executive pardon.

By the politeness of the warden, at another hour, our artist was suffered to visit the cell in which Bristol Bill was confined when not in the work-shop. The turn-key unlocked the heavy door, and the visitor looked within. A cold, narrow cell, but cleanly, was the apartment that met his view. An iron bedstead and a short wooden bench formed the only furniture. Bill sat there unmoved as a statue, and calmly met the strange eyes that were fixed upon him. He did not appear angry or offended, but preserved a most stoical expression of countenance. To the close observer of human nature, however, the light of those dark mysterious eyes was known to stream from the hidden sun of a fiery soul, struggling, in the clouds of adversity, to beam once more in the pure heaven of freedom.

Oh, liberty! can man resign thee,
Once having felt thy generous flame?
Can dungeons, bolts, and bars confine thee.
Or whips thy noble spirit tame?

With a delicate feeling of sympathy for the unhappy prisoner's situation, the artist made short his stay at the cell door, and hastened away. The keepers spoke of Bill as well-behaved, and expressed the opinion that it was impossible for him to escape.

High walls and huge the body may confine,
And iron gates obstruct the prisoner's gaze
And massive bolts may baffle his design,
And vigilant keepers watch his devious ways;
Yet scorns the immortal mind such futile cloy!
No chains can bind it, and no cells destroy!

Bristol Bill, no doubt, though exhibiting no outward manifestation of restless discomfort, suffers acutely in his mind. He

says but little, although it is apparent that his mental senses have lost none of their activity and vigor. So far as regards the physical effect of his imprisonment, he bears his confinement but poorly, and has already lost about twenty pounds of flesh. Although his labor is not laborious, it severely affects his constitution, and it seems as if in course of time it would break him down. He pines for the excitement of active life; but despair has not yet dimmed his soul, or weakened his courage and resolution. No prison can tame such a man—no walls can trammel the daring independence of his mind;—his body may grow spectre-like under the inactive solitude of a dungeon; he may be but the wreck of what he once was; but let the first hopeful ray of freedom mingle with the glances of his eyes, and there again will be seen the MAN *as he was!* The desperation that would nerve his heart, and thrill through his bony arms, would make him a dangerous being to oppose, as he rushed onward to his liberty. If obstructed in an attempted escape, death—*death*—would undoubtedly attend the fearless burglar or some participant in the reckless scene.

It may be supposed by some, that he is left entirely dependent on his own resources in his attempts to free himself from legal bondage; by others, it is confidently believed that no inconsiderable assistance is wanting, outside the prison walls, to make good his deliverance from “*durance vile.*”

What would be Bill’s course, were he to effect an escape, must be left to the imagination. Vengeance on those who have worked him ill, seems deep rooted in his heart; and perhaps, bidding adieu to wise discretion, he would seek the scene of his trial, and wreak his revenge on the heads of those unhappy men who, for their own personal safety, betrayed their leader into the pitiless hands of the law.

Thus dear reader, we complete our work by presenting to you the latest scene

in the interesting career of William Darlington—a man who has reached to the most notorious fame of a confirmed and skilful robber. Circumstances have made him what he is. Born of the most respectable parentage—reared almost in luxury—receiving all the advantages of education which comfortable wealth could bestow—yet, one youthful dereliction shaped the disgraceful course of his after life, and brought him to a convicted felon’s fate. Possessing an ambition and talents which, if rightly directed, would have placed him in a high position in honorable society, he certainly enjoyed, in his youthful days, advantages much beyond those of common mankind. But, even as he might have gained a virtuous name and fame, and ranked far above his fellows—so, yielding to the wayward and reckless pleasures of budding manhood, he entered on another extreme, and is now known to Americans only as the most accomplished and successful robber who ever came to us from the English shores.

We feel that, although we have filled up many an important blank in the criminal history of our country, we have left our work imperfectly performed. The well known tactiturnity of Bristol Bill, and the want of legal documents, have conspired to render our task difficult. But we believe, nevertheless, that we have thrown more light upon this notorious criminal’s career than is to be gleaned from any other individual source. So far as we have explored the mysterious paths of his life, we have stated correctly. Perhaps the time may come, when the seal now upon his lips may be broken, and his full confessions, as transcribed by abler pens, may strike a curious world with awe. Could he, or would he, tell every interesting episode in his remarkable journey through life, it would create astonishment in the minds of all who might hear or read the singular narrative.

Not as in most histories of personal adventure, we close the "life of Bristol Bill" while the subject of our sketch is in the full prime and strength of life and manhood. No tragic scene ends the tale—we tell of no dying bed, and no funeral act. We leave the convict in his living tomb: for, as the poet says—

A prison is in all things like a grave,
Where we no better privileges have
Than dead men; nor so good!

And now the world may read and ponder on the ignominious fate of one who was born to better deeds; but who, having

early wandered from the "straight and narrow path," chose the career of an outlaw, and experienced all the strange vicissitudes attendant on a long period of daring villany. But let not admiration for his brave deeds blind with a false halo his faults and his crimes:—for his is a history, if looked upon aright, which affords a serious lesson to the youth of our times.

When BRISTOL BILL shall pass away he will have

——left a name at which the world grew pale
To point a moral or adorn a tale.

APPENDIX.

On page 84th, and to the 89th inclusive, the reader has found Margaret O'Connor's atrocious affidavit, and the proceedings connected with it. These originally appeared in the *N. Y. Herald*, and since then James Gordon Bennett has been sued by Mr. Wilkes, editor of the *National Police Gazette*, for libel. The falsity of the affidavit, &c., has been made apparent by the revelations produced in the cross-examination of Margaret O'Connor, which took place before Judge Daly, in New York, in December, 1850. She testifies as follows:—

Q. You state in that affidavit that Mr. Wilkes knew that your statement of Boston was false; is that so or not?

A. That is not my language. I stated that Mr. Thompson *had given me to understand* that Mr. Wilkes was perfectly well aware of the falsity of the statement. Mr. Clarke corrected the language I made use of, on that and several times during that examination.

In reply to questions asked by James M.

Smith, Esq., counsel for Mr. Wilkes, the following testimony was elicited:—

Q. Who was present when it (the affidavit) was taken, and where was it taken?

A. It was taken in the interior of the prison; Mr. Horace F. Clark was present, with Justice Mountfort and Mr. Edmonds, the keeper.

Q. Did you read that affidavit yourself before you swore to it?

A. I did not.

Q. Was it read to you, and if so, who read it?

A. I do not know if it was read to me or not; I do not think it was.

Mr. Wilkes, afterwards, in the *National Police Gazette*, speaking of the diabolical means which had been resorted to, to defame himself, and procure Margaret O'Connor's pardon, said most truly:—"It is not only infamous, but horrible, and is enough to make a man tremble with terror, when he undertakes to bring to justice, a powerful band of criminals, who have the means to purchase unscrupulous assistance."

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